

MITHRIDATES,

KING OF PONTUS.

TRAGEDY.

BY NATHANIEL LEE. *K*

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND
A CRITIQUE ON THE PLAY.

A NEW EDITION,
CAREFULLY REVISED.

LONDON:

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1797.

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WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION

LONDON

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor of this, he trusts, improved Edition of Mithridates thinks it necessary to state, that it has been printed from a copy published in 1678, carefully revised. The numerous press errors in all plays printed in the last century are well known; these errors, it is presumed, have been entirely removed, and the text restored to the purity of the author. The printing of it was begun in consequence of its late intended revival at Drury-Lane Theatre; which intention, it is hoped, is not entirely laid aside, as every lover of the drama cannot but be gratified by the display of the very splendid talents of Mrs. SIDDONS, and Messrs. KEMBLE and PALMER, in the parts of SEMANDRA, ZIPHARES, and MITHRIDATES.

MITHRIDATES.

IT is an observation which hath been often made with truth—that Authors are very far from being adequate judges of their own writings; and yet the most celebrated of them have been anxious to bias the opinion, not only of their contemporaries, but of posterity, in favour of some particular part of their works. The sublimest of our poets, Milton, constantly declared his ‘Paradise Regained’ to be his best performance; but the world has long been unanimous in assigning the first place to his ‘Paradise Lost.’ This fact would almost lead us to believe, that there is more skill in judging than in writing well. Without, however, entering into a discussion, whether good writing or good criticism be the most difficult, a consideration of the imperfection of human nature will assist us to solve the problem, and account, in some degree, for the partiality which genius often has shewn for its worst productions. There may, perhaps, be some analogy between the offsprings of the body and those of the mind; and how often do we behold parental weakness lavishing its affection on deformity, vice, and ignorance, while beauty, virtue, and genius, are despised?

In a general view of the subject, what has been here adduced cannot be denied; but still exceptions may be offered, where genius and judgment have gone hand in hand, and an Author been the best critic on himself. The opinion of LEE on the play now under consideration, is certainly one of these exceptions. In his dedication to Lord DORSET, he gives his sentiments of Mithridates in a few words:—‘Methinks I feel a sort of chearful, springing pride, when I see your Lordship stand forth to this last Birth; which sure, if I had ever any lovely, is *much the fairest child.*’ With this opinion, we think, every candid reader, on an attentive perusal of the play, will coincide.

To follow the Author's criticism still farther is but doing him justice, since we are convinced every good critic must see the truth of his observations.

'I have endeavoured, in this tragedy, to mix Shakespeare with Fletcher; the thoughts of the former, for majesty and true Roman greatness, and the softness and passionate expressions of the latter, which make up half the beauties, are never to be matched. It may be objected, I broke the scenes in the beginning of the third and fifth acts. Those who are so nicely curious to be offended at this oversight, may, for their satisfaction, leave them out, and the play will be entire. I apply myself to your Lordship, as Montaigne does to his reader in his chapter of Books: "*I will, says he, love the man that shall trace me!*" For I have many times found fault with an expression, as I pretended was in a play of my own, and had it damned by no indifferent critics, though the immortal Shakspeare will not blush to own it. But I am confident your Lordship will find me out; and I desire to be so found a refiner on those admirable writers: the ground is theirs, and all that serves to make a rich embroidery. I hope the world will do me the justice to think I have disguis'd it into another fashion more suitable to the age we live in: for could I persuade myself there were nothing of mine extraordinary in the play, I would not have dedicated it to the best of men.'

After such elegant and just criticism, we hardly need add our opinion on the general merits of the play, which must, unquestionably, be ranked with the first of our author's works. We cannot, however, forbear making a few observations, which particular passages have suggested to us.—Some plagiarisms from Shakespeare will be discovered by every one who is acquainted with the works of our immortal bard; but these the author's candour has acknowledged; and they are introduced with such taste and judgment as almost to wear the semblance of originality. The first part of act IV. scene 1. is from Richard the Third; and the ground work of Mithridates' dream in the same act may be traced in Henry the Sixth; still, however, many original

beauties are introduced.—A degree of bombast is to be found in many parts of the play: the description of the sacrifice, in act I. and the speech of Pharnaces, in the former part of Act IV. beginning ‘Arm! arm! great Mithridates!’ are strong proofs of this. Yet how far the smallest portion of bombast might agree with Lee’s solid judgment, may be doubted; since every author is forced to sacrifice to the taste of the age he lives in, and a play, which should entirely lay aside the ‘*ampullæ et sesquipedalia verba*’ would have had little chance of success with an audience of the last century, who, it is well known, were not to be pleased by the correctness and truth of nature.—That part of the fourth act where Ziphæes throws himself on the earth to ruminate on ‘Woman’s Falsehood’ is so like the last scene of Act III. and the first scene of Act V. of the Orphan of Otway, that it seems, on a first view, that one of them must be a plagiarism. Lee cannot be the copyist: for Mithridates was published in 1678, and the Orphan not till 1680. But, perhaps, neither of them were plagiarists, and genius in both instances drew from its own inexhaustible stores.—The classical allusions are very frequent throughout the present play: it is, however, worthy of remark, that most of them are taken from Ovid, the prurience of whose imagination probably recommended his writings to most readers, in the luxurious and debauched reigns of Charles and James the Second.

After this general view of Mithridates, it may appear almost unnecessary to point out particular beauties. Still we cannot refrain from pointing out the second scene of Act III. as most exquisitely conducted; and the man who can read the following passage without a tear, must be made of dull impenetrable stuff indeed.

‘*Zipb.* This way the cowards fly; this way the noise goes. I think thou hast it there, and can’st not ’scape me.’

‘*Sem.* I thank the Gods, I shall not.—Let me kiss The hand that kills me.—Oh, too gracious Heav’n! Semandra now is happy.’

Upon the whole we cannot but think, that our author’s

CRITIQUE.

errors (and errors he most assuredly had) were the errors of the age he lived in, and that they are so infinitely counter-balanced by his numerous beauties, and transcendent excellencies, as to appear almost nothing in the scale.

DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DORSET AND MIDDLESEX,
ONE OF THE GENTLEMEN OF HIS MAJESTY'S
RED-CHAMBER, &c.

MY LORD,

WHEN I call to mind what I have observed of your wit and judgment, the truest and most impartial I ever knew, my thoughts of writing after my loose manner to your Lordship are a little dashed; and the meanest of them has the sense to tell me, I ought to be as curious and correct in a Dedication to one man, as in that of a Play to a whole nation. There is, no doubt, a transport in every poet who writes an epistle; but for the most part they are dazzled with the eminence of their patrons, and at best we can but call it an awful delight. But I profess, what those to whom I am disagreeable will impute to want of modesty, I make this tragedy an offering to your Lordship with as much freedom, pleasure, and perfect satisfaction, as ever Mithridates received, when he found himself in the arms of his fairest mistress. You stand equal with the greatest; and your quality should cause a dread in the hardest writers. But, on the other hand, there is such an innate sweetness of temper, such a most remarkable goodness, in all your actions, a character peculiar to you more than any man alive, that the meanest, modestest, of poets may approach you. Methinks I feel a sort of chearful springing pride, when I see your Lordship stand forth to this last birth, which sure, if I had ever any lovely, is much the fairest child. Happy fortune must attend it, and heav'n and earth be pleased, where you approve. I accost you, my Lord, without formality, and would appear before the severest judge in the plainest garb, or rather nakedness of thought: as some, and those not of the least courage, go to the most bloody test of valour, all unarmed. An over-care in things of this nature, does often turn to affectation; and what was meant a guard, proves an incumbrance. We may

stiffen our imaginations with making 'em too quaint; and polish, till we are nothing else but gloss. I am infinitely pleased, to be as plain as I can; nor care I how it pleases others, though I am sure it does, that I have laid this play at your Lordship's feet. All my acquaintance that wish me well, applaud my choice: for I may safely affirm by the judgment of the town, without being censured for a dauber, there's not a man whom all men love, but you; you are beheld in all the company you honour, as if you were the genius of that prince who was called the *Delight of Mankind*; and are adored with all the love and admiration which e'er the noble Titus found in Rome. Ziphares is an imperfect figure of yourself; I cast him in your mould, and fashioned him, as well as my weak fancy could, to that perfection the Court so universally allows you. When I designed to draw him for the Ladies, endearing, soft, and passionately loving. I thought on you, and found the way to charm them. And 'tis most certain, he who obliges those fair critics to be of his party, has the surest cards that ever poet played. I cannot but own the honours they have done me, and intreat your Lordship to secure them my friends. There is yet a greater honour I would beg of your Lordship, and so important, I cannot name it without apprehension: Mithridates, being in your hands, desires to be laid at the feet of the Queen. Her Majesty, who is the sublimest goodness, and most merciful virtue, that ever blest a land, has been pleased to grace him with her presence; and promised it again, with such particular praises, the effects of her pure bounty, that should he not express his gratitude almost to adoration, he would deserve another fate, when he is next represented, than what he has hitherto received.

I have endeavoured, in this tragedy, to mix Shakspeare with Fletcher: the thoughts of the former, for majesty and true Roman greatness, and the softness and passionate expressions of the latter, which make up half the beauties, are never to be matched. How have I then endeavoured to be like them? O faint resemblance! As Pizarro says of the Mexicans,

*And those who now remain,
Appear but as the Shadows of the slain.*

It may be objected, I broke the scenes in the beginning of the third and fifth acts. Those who are so nicely curious to be offended at this oversight, may, for their satisfaction, leave them out, and the play will be entire. I apply myself to your Lordship, as Montaign does to his reader in his chapter of Books: *I will, says he, love the man that shall trace me!* For I have many times found fault with an expression, as I pretended was in a play of my own, and had it damned by no indifferent critics, though the immortal Shakspeare will not blush to own it. But I am confident your Lordship will find me out; and I desire to be so found a refiner on those admirable writers: the ground is theirs, and all that serves to make a rich embroidery. I hope the world will do me the justice to think I have disguis'd it into another fashion more suitable to the age we live in: for could I persuade myself there were nothing of mine extraordinary in the play, I would not have dedicated it to the best of men.

—*Mediocribus esse poetis,*

Non dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ.

Here you must give me leave to tell the world, that pillars, and altars too, ought to be rais'd to your Lordship, if the greatest genius of poetry deserves them. Your thoughts, in some select poems I have seen, are rich and new, as the golden American world; your expressions justly strong; your words emphatical; as chosen men for an enterprize of glory. As it was observed of the army of Alexander the Great, every soldier looked like a commander, and every commander like an Alexander; so, in your admirable draughts, all things are so excellent, we know not where to fix; we stand on hills of so vast a breadth, that the valleys are not seen; it looks like heaven all about us, and fancy is lost in the infinite beauty of the prospect. Your writing dazzles with clearness and majesty; you draw, like Holben, without shadows.

—*Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, & omnes
Præstrinxit stellas, exortus uti ætherius Sol,*

stiffen our imaginations with making 'em too quaint; and polish, till we are nothing else but gloss. I am infinitely pleased, to be as plain as I can; nor care I how it pleases others, though I am sure it does, that I have laid this play at your Lordship's feet. All my acquaintance that wish me well, applaud my choice: for I may safely affirm by the judgment of the town, without being censured for a dauber, there's not a man whom all men love, but you; you are beheld in all the company you honour, as if you were the genius of that prince who was called the *Delight of Mankind*; and are adored with all the love and admiration which e'er the noble Titus found in Rome. Ziphares is an imperfect figure of yourself; I cast him in your mould, and fashioned him, as well as my weak fancy could, to that perfection the Court so universally allows you. When I designed to draw him for the Ladies, endearing, soft, and passionately loving, I thought on you, and found the way to charm them. And 'tis most certain, he who obliges those fair critics to be of his party, has the surest cards that ever poet played. I cannot but own the honours they have done me, and intreat your Lordship to secure them my friends. There is yet a greater honour I would beg of your Lordship, and so important, I cannot name it without apprehension: Mithridates, being in your hands, desires to be laid at the feet of the Queen. Her Majesty, who is the sublimest goodness, and most merciful virtue, that ever blest a land, has been pleased to grace him with her presence; and promised it again, with such particular praises, the effects of her pure bounty, that should he not express his gratitude almost to adoration, he would deserve another fate, when he is next represented, than what he has hitherto received.

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—*Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, & omnes
Præstrinxit stellas, exortus uti ætherius Sol,*

Your images are so great, we look like dwarfs beneath you; and then so lively represented, though of dead, low, objects, animated by your genius,

—*Credas simulacra moveri*

Ferreæ, cognatoque viros spirare metallo.

Whatever you stamp is royal; other pretenders to satire but file and wash; they live by the clippings of your wit, and dip their silver in your bath, to make it pass for gold. Self preservation bids me say no more of your Lordship's poetry, lest I damn my own, who aim at nothing so much as the honour of being thought by your Lordship,

My Lord,

Your most humble, obedient,

And devoted Servant,

NATHANIEL LEE.

THE LIFE OF NATHANIEL LEE.

NATHANIEL LEE, a very eminent dramatic poet of the last century, was the son of Dr. Lee, minister of Hatfield, who gave him a liberal education. He received his first rudiments of learning at Westminster-school, from whence he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was admitted a scholar on the foundation in 1668. He commenced B. A. the same year; but, not succeeding to a fellowship, he tried to push his fortune at court. He was not long, however, in this pursuit: for, meeting with no substantial favours, he determined to try his talents on the stage; and accordingly, in the year 1672, made his appearance at the Duke's Theatre in the character of *Duncan* in *Macbeth*. Cibber says, that our author was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes, that he had been informed by an actor who was present, that while Lee was reading to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part, and said, "Unless I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it!" And yet (continues the laureat) this very author, whose elocution raised such admiration in so capital an actor, when he attempted to be an actor himself, soon quitted the stage in an honest despair of ever making any profitable figure there. In 1675 his first play appeared; and he wrote nine plays, besides two in which he joined with Dryden, between that period and the year 1684, in which, on the 11th of November, he was taken into Bedlam, where he continued four years. All his tragedies contain a very great portion of true poetic enthusiasm. None ever felt the passion of love more truly; nor could any one describe it with more tenderness. Addison commends his genius highly; observing that none of our English poets had a happier turn for tragedy, although his natural fire and unbridled impetuosity hurried him beyond all bounds of probability, and sometimes were quite out of nature. The truth is, the poet's imagination ran away with his reason. While in Bedlam, he made that famous witty reply to a coxcomb scribbler, who had the cruelty to jeer him with his misfortune, by observing that it was an easy thing to write like a

madman: *No*, said Lee, *it is not an easy thing to write like a madman; but it is very easy to write like a fool!*

Lee had the good fortune to recover the use of his reason, so far as to be discharged from his melancholy confinement; but he did not long survive his enlargement, dying in the year 1691, or 1692. Oldys, in his MS. notes, says, that our author, returning one night from the Bear and Harrow, in Butcher Row, through Clare-market, to his lodging, in Duke-street, overladen with wine, fell down, on the ground as some say, according to others on a bulk, and was killed or stifled in the snow. He was buried in the parish church of St. Clement's Danes, aged about thirty-five years.

His dramatic pieces are:

1. *Nero, Emperor of Rome.* T. 4to. 1675.
2. *Sophonisba, or Hannibal's Overthrow.* T. 4to. 1676.
3. *Gloriana; or, The Court of Augustus.* T. 4to. 1676.
4. *The Rival Queens; or, Alexander the Great.* T. 4to. 1677.
5. *Mitbridates, King of Pontus.* T. 4to. 1678.
6. *Theodosius; or, The Force of Love.* T. 4to. 1680.
7. *Cæsar Borgia.* T. 4to. 1680.
8. *Lucius Junius Brutus.* T. 4to. 1681.
9. *Constantine the Great.* T. 4to. 1684.
10. *The Princess of Cleve.* T. 4to. 1689.
11. *The Massacre of Paris.* T. 4to. 1690.

Besides the above tragedies, Lee was concerned with Dryden in writing the *Duke of Guise*, 1683, and that other excellent tragedy, entitled *Oedipus*, 1679. His *Theodosius* and *Alexander the Great* are stock-plays, and to this day are often acted with great applause. Mr. Barry was particularly fortunate in the character of the Macedonian Hero.

PROLOGUE.

NOT careful leaders, when the trumpets call
Their martial squadrons on, to stand or fall,
Toss'd with more doubts, than careful poets are,
When vent'rous wit for sally does prepare ;
When humming voices bid the play begin,
And the last flourish calls the Prologue in.
Here you, like dreadful warriors, judging sit,
And, in full council, try all writers' wit.
To some, for sense renown'd, our author's bow,
And what you doom, for a just fate allow.
But sure far less such judges poets dread,
Than those raw blades who will not let 'em plead,
But, e'er they can be heard, cry, " shoot 'em dead." }
These Pirates, that both arms and wits debase,
Who fields and poems, with their spleen, disgrace, }
Poets and warriors both shou'd have in chase :
These libellers who noblest fights despise,
Yet, when a pan but flashes, shut their eyes ;
Who write lampoons, and vilely get a name
By others' infamy, and live on shame ;
Fifes, whifflers, of the justest sense, not fit
To be the powder-monkeys of true wit :
Mimics, like apes, what's ill from heads they drain,
And live upon the vermin of a brain.
Neglecting these, and trusting to your aid,
To Beauty our last voices, like yours, are made :—
Beauty, which still adorns the op'ning list,
Which Cæsar's heart vouchsafes not to resist :—
To that alone devoted is this day :
For, by the poet, I was bid to say, }
In the first draft, 'twas meant the Ladies' Play.

Dramatis Personæ.

Men.

MITHRIDATES, King of Pontus,	-	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
ZIPHARES,	}	his Sons,		{ Mr. Kemble.
PHARNACES,				{ Mr. Wroughton.
ARCHELAUS, General under Ziphares,			-	Mr. Aickin.
PELOPIDAS,	}	Two Courtiers,		{ Mr. Barrymore.
ANDRAVAR,				{ Mr. R. Palmer.
AQUILIUS, a Roman Captive,	-	-	-	Mr. C. Kemble.
Another Roman Officer,	-	-	-	Mr. Whitfield.
ISMENES, Page to Ziphares,	-	-	-	Master Welsh.

Women.

MONIMA, contracted to Mithridates,	-	-	Mrs. Powell.
SEMANDRA, Daughter to Archelaus,	-	-	Mrs. Siddons.
PRIESTS, and ATTENDANTS,			
MUTES,			

Scene, Sinope.



MITHRIDATES, KING OF PONTUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*The outer part of the Temple of the Sun. A noise
of Music and tuning Voices is heard. Enter
PHARNACES and PELOPIDAS.*

Pharnaces.

TO night, to night, this fatal moment, now,
Our dreadful father's nuptials are preparing,
And I must lose bright Monima for ever!
Ambition too is barr'd; sceptres, and crowns,
And all the golden quarries, now are lost.
Ziphares, O Ziphares, happy brother!
Thou hast dislodg'd me by thy late exploits,
And now usurp'st my father's breast alone.
Curs'd be the pow'r that bless'd thee on thy way
To overthrow Triarius! curs'd the stars
That glitter'd round thy head, when by thy arm
So many tribunes and centurions fell,
As made Rome groan, and broke Lucullus' heart!

Pelop. Hear me, my lord——

Pbar. This morning, on a mountain
Above the clouds, his triumph was perform'd,
And I assisted at the sacrifice!
Why gave I not this body to the flames,
To be devour'd among the tortur'd slaves,
Rather than liv'd to see his conquest crown'd?
I saw it; Oh, Pelopidas, these eyes
Saw Mithridates, with a torch, give fire
To the vast pile, which, like a pyramid,
Stood high upon the hill, as that on earth!

Pelop. Will you but give me leave?---

Pbar. I saw the blaze
Of his immortal honour; heard the shout
Of all the court, which did torment the air
To that degree, that birds fell round us dead;
And that thin region, where we scarce cou'd live
When first we did ascend, became so fat
With the rich steam of blood, and boiling gold,
And flowing gums, that we were forc'd remove.
Nay, I believe, the glutt'd Gods themselves
Were almost choak'd with the prodigious odours.

Pelop. Yet have you done?

Pbar. To the green Neptune then,
Because at sea old Archelaus had
Been conqueror with my brother, in their names
An off'ring was decreed:—a chariot, all
With emeralds set, and fill'd with coral tridents,
Was with a hundred horses, wild as wind,
From off the top of that most dismal place
Plung'd to the bottom of the slimy deep.

Pelop. Let me intreat you call your reason
home,

And listen to your faithful servant's counsel:
You cannot hate your brother more to death,
Than I his friend, the General Archelaus:
'Has got the start of me in the King's favour;
And tho', without being vain, I think myself
The better soldier, he by politics
Has push'd me from the dignities I bore:—
The Lion's ousted by the Fox!——

Pbar. But with full cry
Let us unkennel him: rather rebel,
Than bear it thus: 'tis mine, 'tis thy concern;
Nor let the name of King, or Father, awe us.
A mistress, and a throne! most specious titles!
The God of Battle rages in my breast;
And as at Delphos, when the glorious fury
Kindles the blood of the prophetic maid,
The bounded Deity does shoot her out,
Draws every nerve thin as a spider's thread,
And beats the skin out like expanded gold:—
So, with the meditation of the work
Which my soul bears, I swell almost to bursting.

Pelop. In all the many changes of my life,
I have not known one equal yet to your's:
At other times, so moderate, so true
A sovereign o'er yourself, you seem'd to want
Those passions for your slaves, who lord it now.

Pbar. I'm hush'd:—if thou hast ought of
comfort, speak!

Pelop. This night, your father has decreed to
marry

The daughter of Palemon.

Pbar. What can hinder ?

Pelop. Nothing ; yet mark : my brother Tryphon is

High-priest o' th' Sun, whom all the rest obey.
Him have I wrought, that when the nuptial rites
Begin, some strange presages shall fall out,
Disorders unexpected, to foreshow
The Gods are much offended at the marriage.
How this may work with one of mighty faith
In holy fables, one of various humour,
Whom, every day, new beauties set on fire,
Be you the judge.

Pbar. Methinks it has a face ;
But yet there's wanting what I cou'd have wish'd :
Had it been Janus-like, back'd with another :---
When Mithridates frighted from his queen,
Warn'd by false oracles, shou'd have retir'd,
Perplex'd, yet struggling with the pangs of love,
Then to have laid a beauty to his longing,
Some fair unknown, proud of her gaudy bloom,
T'have quench'd his thirsty wishes--that had been
A masterpiece ! But let him marry her :---
Sure Death shall wait upon his laughing Hymen ;
And when the God has given her to his arms,
Fate with unerring force shall part 'em ever.

Pelop. Yet raging ? 'Tis as you have said, and
more !

More than excelling Mischief cou'd invent,
That is not best ! We have already rais'd him :
Andravar, my Lieutenant-General,

Scorn'd by your brother, whom he therefore
hates,

First form'd the plot :--old Archelaus' daughter,
The fair Semandra, mistress to Ziphares,
Is destin'd to be made your father's prey.

Pbar. Excellent engine! now thou work'st
indeed!

Thou hast hit the vein, the life-blood of his heart!
I cannot see ought in the extent of art,
Or nature, that can mend it. O Ziphares,
Still conquer! rise with triumphs, high as heav'n,
So such a bolt as this be sure to wait thee!

Enter ANDRAVAR.

But see, the brave Lieutenant! Come to my arms!
And tell me, shall Semandra be the King's?

Andr. I think, my lord, that I may safely
swear it.

Pbar. Thy bluntness merits praise, and says,
thou'rt fit

To serve my best revenge, love, or ambition.

Andr. Great Mithridates, whom I well have
studied,

Tho' he has weather'd forty winter fields,
Yet rises in his vigour, ventures more,
Nor feels decay of strength: none learn'd as he
In Nature's garden; whence to his constitution
Most excellent, he adds such helps by Art,
That by his looks he might be thought immortal.
The world, too, knows he is as amorous now,
As when the first sighs heav'd his youthful
breast,

And his first tears bedew'd the shrines of Love.

Pbar. The consequence ?

Andr. He often has been pleas'd
To make me honour'd with his private thoughts:
Whereon my General and I agreed,
Knowing your love to Monima,
And hatred to your brother, with one blow
To drive the business that shou'd crown your
wishes.

Therefore I daily fill'd your father's ears
With praises of Semandra ; rais'd his wonder ;
Describ'd her dress, and each particular grace ;
Her eyes, her hands, her lips, with all their
beauties ;

And have so fir'd him, that there only wants
A view, to perfect all ; and that will be—
To night !

Pbar. How know'st thou that ?

Andr. I learnt it all
From a she-slave that waits upon Semandra ;
Who told me that Ziphares, with consent
Of Archelaus, wou'd beg her of the King,
When he, this night, shou'd Monima espouse.
Nor doubt, but when he once has seen Se-
mandra,
The charms of his new queen will vanish.
Hark,

[*Soft music.*

The sacred music sounds ! The King and
Queen are coming !

Enter ARCHELAUS, ZIPHARES, SEMANDRA.

See, your Brother, Semandra, and her Father!

Phar. O my lab'ring breast! how hopes and fears

Toss my rack'd heart, like a poor bark, about!
But soon the calm will come, or I must perish
in the tempest.

[*Exeunt* *Phar. Pelop. and Andr.*]

Zipb. By heav'n, my love, thou dost distract my
soul:—

There's not a tear that falls from those dear eyes
But makes my heart weep blood——O my father!
All is not well! I found her in the morning,
Not like a bride, with all her maids about her,
Half-smiling, now half-serious, with her thoughts
Of what must come; nor warm, nor bright, nor
blushing;---

But, Oh the Gods! I found her on the floor,
In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful,
Sighing such breath of sorrow, that her lips,
Which late appear'd like buds, were now o'er-
blown;

Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
That, were the world on fire, they might have
drown'd

The wrath of heav'n, and quench'd the mighty
ruin!

Arch. Nothing, my lord——'tis all but vir-
gin fear.

Marriage to maids is like a war to men:

The battle causes fear ; but the sweet hopes
Of winning at the last still draws 'em on.

Sem. Alas, my lord ! [Weeping.]

Zipb. What, but alas ?---no more ?---When by
the hand

I led her to the temple, thus she sigh'd,
And hung upon me. If thou truly lov'st me,
If I may credit my Semandra's tears,
Think 'em not drops of chance, like other
women's,

The weather of their souls, the crystal bubbles
Which they can make at will,---Oh satisfy
The longings of my breast, and tell thy sorrows !

Sem. That I do love you, O all you Host of
Heav'n,

Be witness ! that you are dear to me,
Dearer than day to one whom sight must leave,
Dearer than life to one that fears to die,
O thou bright pow'r, be judge, whom we adore !
Be witness of my truth, be witness of my love !
But yet I fear---

Zipb. That fear, give me that fear, Semandra !
Produce it in the ugliest form it has,
If ought that is deform'd can come from thee.

Sem. I shall, my lord, since you are pleas'd
to hear me,

Unfold my doubts, the cause of all my tears.
First, then, I must complain of my hard stars,
That did not dart kind lustre on my birth :
For tho', at present, while your young blood
boils,

Your reason cannot get the rein of passion,
Yet it will come, when long possession cloy's you,
Then you will think what queens you might have
had,

With kingdoms for their dower! perhaps you
may

Prove so unkind, to tell me of it too;

Or, if you shou'd not, yet your eyes wou'd
speak—

[Weeping.

Enough to break the heart of poor Semandra.

Zipb. Why dost thou stab me with the ten-
derness

Of thy false fears, and melt me into mourning?

'Tis most unseasonable, on our wedding-day,

To be seen thus: I know thou canst not doubt me:

No, thou most lovely of the fairer kind!

Think not a crown can ever change my virtue.

Ah, who wou'd leave the warmth of this lov'd
bosom

For the cold cares which black ambition brings?

Sem. Spite of ill-boding dreams, unlucky
omens,

You must, you shall, you ought to be, believ'd.

And, if I weep again, it is for joy

That I this night shall be your happy bride.

Zipb. Oh, Mithridates! mighty as thou art,
Before whose throne princes stand dumb as
death,

With folded arms, and their eyes fix'd to earth!

Dishonour brand me, if I wou'd not chuse

A private life with her whom my soul loves,

Rather than live like thee, with all thy titles,
The King of Kings, without her!

Arch. Pray, my lord,
Defer till midnight these strong ecstacies:
Fate yet may put a bar betwixt our hopes,
And then the loss will be more hardly borne.
[*Exeunt Archelaus, Ziphares, Semandra.*]

SCENE III.

The inner part of the Temple of the Sun. MITHRIDATES bolding MONIMA by the band; his Queens, Concubines, Sons and Daughters attending.— Three Roman Captains, L. CASSIUS, Q. OPPIUS, and MANIUS AQUILIUS, bound in Golden Chains, with many other Slaves, standing at a distance.

Mitb. Not yet, O Rome, great tyrant of the world!

Hast thou subdu'd the Asian Emperor.
In thy despite I hold my glory still,
Still tread upon the necks of conquer'd Kings,
Still make thy Consuls tremble at my name;
And, in one mightiest word to sum up all,---
A word which, like a charm, might raise the ghosts
Of Pyrrhus, and the experienc'd Hannibal
To envy, and be dazzled at my deeds,---
A word, a name, that comprehends all honours,
All titles, riches, power, all majesty,---
In spite of Rome, I'm Mithridates still!

Aquil. The nations must confess, that Alexander.

Cou'd not more dreadful to the East appear
Than you: ev'n Rome wou'd buy her peace
with joy,

Cou'd you at reasonable rates afford
Your royal friendship ; tho' by your command,
Most dreadful to Italian memory,
In one dark day, damn'd in the book of fate,
A hundred thousand murder'd Romans fell.

Mitb. Dar'st thou, fomenter of these wars,
to talk ?

Thou, purple source of all these bloody streams,
Which have for more than thirty years o'erflow'd
The Asian banks, and dy'd Euphrates red ?
Darest thou, commissioner in chief, to put
The earth in arms, and set the world on flame,
Once think of peace ? Now, by the fire-rob'd
God,

Thou shalt have punishment that fits thy crimes !

Aquil. The bravest must submit when Fortune frowns !

Mitb. Desire of wealth, the lust of shining dirt
And palace plunder, caus'd thee with arm'd
legions,

T' invade a king, whose father was Rome's friend !
But, by the asserted justice of my cause,
The help of heav'n, and of my own right-hand,
I conquer'd thee, and thou art now my slave !
Guards, straight convey him to the market-place ;
Take off his wealthy chains, and melt 'em down ;
Then for a terrible example to
All sordid wretches, souls made up of avarice,

Pour down his throat the rich dissolved mass,
And gorge his entrails with the burning gold!

Mon. Not, my dear lord, upon your nuptial
day.

Mith. On any day, my Queen, to do a justice
Which all the Gods, and all good men, must like!
For Lucius Cassius, and for Quintus Oppius,
A milder destiny's in store.---Away with him!
And now proceed we to the sacred rites.

Aquil. Yet, ere you join, hear me, proud
Emperor!

Hear what the Fates have put into my breast!
I see my death, by Roman arms, reveng'd;
And what Lucullus had so well begun,
Pompey shall end--- Pompey, thy glory's ruin!
This hour, that gives me death, shall be the last
Of all thy quiet: swift domestic jars
Shall overtake thee; thou shalt add more blood
To that already shed, from thy own bowels;
And when at last, subdu'd in all thy wars,
Spoil'd of thy queens, thy sons and daughters
slain,
Thou seek'st some corner of thy conquer'd em-
pire,
To hide thy abandon'd head in, then the load
Of all thy woes shall come: one whom thou
least
Shalt fear, long nourish'd in thy 'impious
breast,
Shall stab thee to the heart, and end thy days.
That this, all this, and more may light upon
thee,

I pray the Gods ; and so the Furies seize thee !

Mith. Away, to death, with the prophetic fool ! [*Exit. Guards with Aquilius.*

Tryphon, begin ; and let the altar smoke
With such rich victims to the well-pleas'd Gods,
That they may smile from heav'n, and give us
joy.

Here follows the Entertainment : after which, the King and Queen return from the altar to sit in state. An image of Victory descends with two crowns in her bands ; but, on a sudden, the engines break, and cast the image forward on the Stage with such violence, that they dash it in pieces. MITHRIDATES starts up.

Mith. Ha ! whence ? how fell this out ? now,
by my arms,

Our nuptials are not pleasing to the Gods !
'Tis for some fault of mine, O Monima,
That heav'n denies thy beauties to my bosom :
Thus, when we did approach the hallow'd
vault,

A prophesying priest, with start up hair,
With rolling eyes, and nostrils wide as mouths,
Stopt us i'th' way, and said we were no match.

As well the noblest savage of the field
Might tamely couple with a fearful ewe,

Tygers engender with the timorous deer,

Wild muddy boars defile the cleanly ermine,

Or vultures sort with doves, as I with thee !

'Tis a cross thought, and much disturbs me
here.

Mon. Command me die, ere give your Majesty

Cause of the least disturbance! O, my lord!
Think you that I would lie within your arms
To hear you sigh, and give me tears for love?
Or think you, 'tis to Empire I aspire?
Rather dismiss me from your breast, the haven
Where I had hoarded all my happiness,
And cast me out to a wide sea of weeping.

Mitb. Howe'er the Pow'rs above shall deal
with me,

Racking my heart with what they have set
down,

Thou art our Queen!

Mon. O, 'tis an empty name,
A senseless sound, except I am your love!
I find, I find, that I am lost for ever:
I have but slept, charm'd with a golden dream,
And now am wak'd to beggary again.
Why did you take me from my father's wing?
Who, tho' a petty prince, was yet a world
Of wealth to me?—why did you tempt me forth
With burning love, and the bright comet
power?

Mitb. Fright not thy tender heart with false
suspicions!

I will be ever thine. But give me leave
A little to digest, with serious thoughts,
The anger of the heav'ns—Andravar!

Andr. My lord!

Pbar. They whisper, General. [To Pelop.

Zipb. [*coming forward.*] Stars, by your leave!
Ill omens may the guilty tremble at,
Make every accident a prodigy,
And monsters frame where Nature never err'd;
May the sear'd conscience start at falling me-
teors,

And call the scream of every hooting owl,
Or croaking raven, Fate's most dreadful voice:
For me, I laugh at 'em! Shou'd now the heav'n
Flame with a thousand fires, ne'er seen before,
And thunder beat the winds from every corner,
Not for the calm of all the universe
Wou'd I put off my joys a moment longer.
Stand back, my love! and when I call, come
forth:

A minute makes us blest or wretched ever.

[Comes to the middle of the stage and kneels.

Mitb. Is there, in all the space of our wide
empire,

Ought of that most inestimable value
To make Ziphares kneel?

Zipb. There is, my lord,
Thus to adore you!

Mitb. Oh! celestial Powers!

Mark me your subject out for all misfortunes;
The curses of the Roman Manius fall
Heavy upon me; fortune's giddy wheel,
Which we have fix'd with our majestic weight,
Turn round with me; when I deny him ought
That he can ask with honour:- -rise, my son!

Zipb. [*rising.*] Since on the great request
which I shall make

The peace or trouble of my life depends,
The torment or the pleasure of my soul,
Eternal griefs, or everlasting joys,
I wou'd recall to your remembrance, sir,
The toils and hardship which my early valour
Has undergone; the many fields I've fought,
And conquer'd too; and as of old the Romans,
Who sought the Consulship, made bare their
breasts,

Lac'd with long scars, and studded o'er with
thrusts,

(The noble wardrobe of the scarlet war,)

I wou'd, with bolder mention of my deeds,
Display my wounds, to move your royal favour,
And offer to the blood which I have shed,
All my heart holds, for sealing of your promise!

Mitb. Oh, had'st thou fought, so poorly as thou
speak'st,

Thy actions, all the laurels which lie green
Upon thee, straight wou'd wither, and be dust.
To mention but thy last, thy last of wars,
Which ev'n the breath of Majesty makes vile,
So much below thy valour is all language——

Zipb. The glory of that battle is your own.

Mitb. To thee we owe the day, our life, and
empire:

When six centurions bore me from my saddle,
And laid me groveling, for the violent horse
To tread my soul out, how did my brave Zi-
phares

Break through their walls of steel, leap o'er
the ramparts

Of the dead bodies that had fenc'd me in,
On his own courser mounting me to life,---
Pious even in the mouth of slaughter!
While on foot himself, he with his battle-axe
Bore down the legions, drove whole troops
before him,
And brought their eagles drooping from the
field!

Demand, I say; ask me most royally!
I will be lavish to thy vast ambition,
And crown thy wishes like a giving God.

Zipb. In thankfulness I bend me to the earth,
Once more fall prostrate to your Majesty,
And pray the Gods to give you length of days!
Come forth, come forth, my fairest! break, my
day!

Appear, and charm! dazzle the whole as-
sembly! [*Semandra comes forward.*]

Mitb. A wonder! ha!

Zipb. She is, my lord, the boast,
The lovely chance-work, master-piece, of Nature,
Who blush'd to see what her own hands had
made;

As if, mistaking moulds, she unawares
Had cast Semandra in a form divine.

Sem. These praises, breath'd from any lips
but your's,
Lord of my life, and idol of my love,
Wou'd make me sink with shame, or scorn the
flatterer;

But as they come from you, from that lov'd
mouth,

The tender off'rings of your fond desires,
I take 'em all, and die upon the sound!
To the driven air my flying soul is fasten'd;
Each word, each syllable you spoke is mine :---
Yes, I am fair; a queen, a goddess; any thing
That my dear lord is pleas'd to have me be!

Mith. She talks——

Zipb. And with so good a grace,
That nothing but her wit can charm beyond it,
Late in the camp I languish'd with a fever,
And sure had died, but for this fair physician;
Who, in the midst of all my fiery pains,
When art was at a loss, and I lay gasping,
Wou'd quite beguile my sufferings with her
songs,

Her welcome pity, and her soft endearments:---
Now, laying her chaste cheek, cold with her
tears,

To mine, she wou'd abate the raging fire;
Now, with warm sighs kindle my fading spirits,
And, when I fainted, with a kiss recall me!

Mith. By heav'n, she weeps, and I cou'd drink
the dew!

Pbar. He takes the poison, fast as I could
wish.

Pelop. And prince Ziphares forces her upon
him.

Arch. Hold, you have gone too far:---speak to
the purpose.

Zipb. Ambition, therefore, was not my request—

In Colchis or in Bosphorus to reign :---
Leave to my brothers all your empire; and
To me, this only beauty for reward.

Mitb. Reward! Wert thou on Mithridates' throne,
Possess'd of all his kingdoms—were thine eye
Like his who guides the day, and thou could'st call,
In all thy journies, what thou saw'st thy own,—
Her eyes wou'd match thy lustre,—all thy glories

Wou'd be but shadows, when this face appear'd.

Zipb. They wou'd, my lord!

Mitb. They wou'd, my lord!—yet more:---
By all my royalties, a God might wed her,
And be a gainer by the beauteous bride.

Zipb. Such as she is—

Mitb. Not heav'n itself can mend her.
Had I as many tongues as I have languages,
Skill'd in all speeches of the babbling world,
And cou'd at once speak to as many nations,
With such a grace as might make Athens blush,
By Mercury, and by the Father of
The Muses, I shou'd never speak Semandra.

Mon. O, he is gone! his vow'd fidelity
Is gaz'd away!

Mitb. Tell me her birth, Ziphares:
She must be more than royal.

Zipb. Fate, thy worst!
Let me be dumb for ever from this moment.

Arch. In me your Majesty may please to read
Her father.---What I want in dignity,
Be pleas'd to fill up with my services.

Mith. Thy daughter!

Arch. Yes, my gracious lord,---my daughter.

Mith. O pity that so fair a star shou'd be
The child of night; that such a stream of
crystal

Shou'd have her spring so muddy!

Thou dy'st, thou saucy, old, ambitious, dotard!
Who darst to match thy lees of blood with ours,
And daub the throne of the immortal Cyrus.

Zipb. Hold, hold, most awful, give Ziphares
death!

Impale me, burn me, bury me alive,
But do not wrong this innocent old man,---
These hairs, which were made silver in your
service!

O the good Gods! whom fear cou'd never
shake,

Your bitter words have caus'd to tremble: see,
With the disgrace, he weeps; his springs of
life

Which had been dry for fifty years, this last
Affront has water'd:—

Oh my poor father!

Mith. Ha! that name again!

Thou art no more my son! For thee, Semandra,
Thou shalt attend our queen.---To court, my
fair!

Where I must learn you to forget Ziphares,
And match you equal to your birth.

Sem. My lord!——Ziphares!——father!

Mitb. Look not back.---

Conduct the Queen, Pharnaces. O Semandra!

'Tis to your tears I sacrifice my justice;

To them, your father's life I'll not deny,

Who, for ambition, did deserve to die.

[*Exeunt all but Ziphares and Archelaus.*

Arch. Dotard! and saucy! nay, the lees of
blood!

Now, by the Gods, 'tis sprightly as his own :---

O, 'tis too much to bear. Forgive me, Prince!

It breaks the very neck of loyalty :---

Perhaps, he whores my daughter too.---But first,

Rather than see him wear my glory's spoils,

Thou, my good sword, that hast so oft been
drawn,

And dy'd thyself in Roman bowels, to

The very guard, for this ungrateful King,

Be faithful to me, as thou still hast been,

And pierce the heart of thy dishonour'd master!

Ziph. Oh, Archelaus! oh, my kinder father!

If you are stirr'd thus at an angry word,

What shou'd I be? I who am lost indeed,

I who am stunn'd, I who sustain'd the stroke

Of all the anger of the fates at once?

Semandra! O my love!

Arch. Restrain your grief,

As I my rage; and let us think apace.

Though for my daughter's virtue I would stake

My immortal part, my fame so dearly bought.

Yet force, which he may use, will have its way:

Consider that.

Zipb. Consider ! how shou'd I
Consider, who grow mad with crowding thoughts;
Where every one, endeav'ring to be foremost,
Stops up the passage, and will choak my reason?

Arch. Once more speak humbly to him:
Perhaps, 'tis but a sudden short-liv'd fit,
A gust of passion that may soon blow over.
But if you find it rooted in his heart,
Eat your way through him, to your happiness,
Or perish, like your brother Mithridates.

Zipb. By Heav'n, I think it greatest happiness
Never to have been born ; and next to that,
To die ! for who that wears his flesh can bear
The curse of accidents, a change like mine ?
I who, some moments past, wou'd not have
chang'd

Condition with the blessed Gods themselves,
Now, in all probability, am lost,
And stand upon the very brink of ruin !

Arch. Your destiny's uncertain : fate, as yet,
Holds the scale doubtful. Let us haste to court,
Where we shall learn which way the balance
falls.

Zipb. Not half an hour ago, methought secure
I hugg'd myself, and almost cou'd have wept
In mere compassion to th' hard-fated world,
Thinking how much my state was happier.

Arch. Yet all the while you did not spy the
danger
Which crept invisible, and undermin'd you.

Zipb. Alas, I did not : without fear I stood.
Like one who, on the beach, descries from far

A labouring bark, with which the billows war;
Pities its state, wishing the tempest gone,
But views not the near sea come rolling on:
So did with me my unseen fortune play,
Till the waves came, and wash'd me quite away.

Exeunt omnes.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter PHARNACES and PELOPIDAS.

Pharnaces.

I'LL hear no more; get me a hundred horse
To be our guard; I'll bear her hence to night,
And ravish her; by all the fire that acts
This fearless frame, I will! Declare the difference...

Is not the blood of Queens and Princesses
Like other women's? souls alike infus'd?
Their banquets richer, and the drinks they taste
The very spirits of the purple vine?
Yet we must think 'em cold as candied ice,---
Not a thought starting,---free from warm desires
As the bleak girl upon the mountain's top,
Cover'd with snow, beaten with constant winds,
That feeds on herbs and roots, and drinks the
dew.

Pelop. What, wou'd you have her fall like
mellow fruit

Which yet no sun has shone upon, no warmth
Has ripen'd ?---'bate a little of this fire.

Pbar. Pelopidas, I oft have told you, that
She knew my love, before she saw my father:
For in the plunder I first lighted on her,
Though afterwards he took my beauteous spoil,
As now he does my brother's. I alleg'd,
As late I led her weeping to her chamber,
My constant passion, and his breach of faith,
All that a love most violent cou'd put
Into a lover's mouth, like mine; but she, un-
mov'd,

Insensible, reply'd,---the King, 'twas possible,
At last might kill her with his cruelty;
Yet to the utmost moment of her life
She wou'd adore him with such spotless love,
Such most romantic faith, and such a deal
Of whining grief, that in a rage I flung
Away, and left her talking to herself.

Pelop. And do you think this haughtiness
will carry't?

He that will win a most exalted beauty,
Must bend his soul low, as he bows his body;
Watch every glance; obey her ere she speaks;
Cast up his eyes at each affected word;
And swear---besides her honour, Sir, her ho-
nour,

Obliges her to stand a while at distance.

Pbar. 'Tis all most empty--honour, courtship,
all

But gaudy nonsense. O Pelopidas!

Rather than buy my pleasure with such baseness,
I'd be a brute. Now, by my life, methinks
The happier creature, cast before thy eyes :—
The generous horse, loose in a flow'ry lawn,
With choice of pasture, and of crystal brooks,
And all his chearful mistresses about him,
The white, the brown, the black, the shining
bay,

And every dappled female of the field.
Now, by the Gods, for ought we know, as man
Thinks him a beast, man seems a beast to him.

Pelop. Bemoore considerate, less rash and hot :—
I have thought of an expedient to gain her.

Pbar. Thou art my better genius, and shalt
flourish,
When Archelaus, like a blasted tree,
Lies rotting to the ground !

Pelop. Did Mithridates
Know of your love to Monima ?

Pbar. He did :
As publicly I show'd it as Ziphares.
Yet he who, like the Hesperian Dragon, thinks
The golden fruit of beauty all his own,
Flew at me as a thief, who, while he slept,
Had stol'n his prize, and made me pay it back,
Or swore my life shou'd be the fatal forfeit.

Pelop. 'Tis as I cou'd have wish'd :—thus
then—the King,
Whose heart Semandra kindles into flame,
Cools every hour to his new-marry'd Bride,
And will not bed till the coronation.

A mere put-off, waning in deep disgust,
And wishing for pretence to part for ever.

Pbar. Which he shall have : this head of thine
has thought it.

Pelop. I and the needful Andravar,
Who feels the pulse of his affection,
Will swear boldly,
As witnesses who had both seen and heard,
The jealous Monima, enrag'd with love,
But more for what her vast ambition lost,
Strove to revive the passion that you bore her,
But you most gen'rously oppos'd her charms;
Which with unwillingness you shall confess,
And beg your fiery father to forgive her.

Pbar. Pithy, and short,—thou art the soul
of counsel !

Pelop. The very breaking of the business,
throws
Her into prison ; where, while I guard the door,
Your Highness may, with as much ease, perform
Your pleasure, as your faithful servant thought it.

Pbar. In thanks, the vilest, fawning, lying
slave

Wou'd speak thee fairer, than Pharnaces shall;
But let my deeds be grateful to my soldier.

Enter ANDRAVAR.

What news, my Andravar ?

Andr. Your Guardian-spirit
Now lays about him, and invisibly
Acts wonders for you, madding all the court:—

Semandra weeping, and your father burning ;
Monima, like a widow'd-turtle, mourning ;
Old Archelaus pushing on his fate,
And amorous Ziphares, led by love
To tumble from the top of all his hopes.
Defiance from the Roman Consul Glabrio
Is sent, and the third Pontic War renewed ;
But love so rocks your father's drowsy brain
That all the trumpets of the thund'ring legions
Can scarce awake him. See where he comes !

Enter MITHRIDATES, attended.

His haughty courage scarce submitting to
The weight which presses him, but striking out.

Mith. She must be mine! this admirable
creature!

Her charms are now inevitable grown ;
And, while I seem to fright her from my son,
I talk, and gaze, and dote, to my undoing....
See her no more!—lose her with weighty
thoughts,

And drown her in the ocean of thy power!---
In vain I strive with cares to keep her down,
In vain does business sink her to the bottom ;—
This bladder love still bears her up again.

Pbar. Like a caught lion raging in the snare,
He plunges in his passion, spends his force,
And struggles with the toil that holds him faster.

Mith. See her no more---and live!- -impos-
sible!

As well I might bid meteors keep their lustre,
When all the shining exhalation's spent
That fed their short-liv'd glory.

Enter MONIMA.

Mon. O Mithridates! O my cruel lord!
I come with all the violence of grief,
To take my last farewell.

Mitb. What means the Queen?

Mon. The Queen! O mockery of state!
Pageant of greatness! wond'ered at a while,
But straight neglected like a common thing!
I come, my lord, to beg, (O heav'ns!) your
leave,

Your royal licence, to retire from court;
And, since my father by your bounty reigns
At Ephesus, I there wou'd go to mourn,
And languish out my wretched life's remain.

Mitb. Why will you add new troubles to my
bosom,
Already burthen'd with the wrath of heav'n,
By your unnecessary grief?

Mon. From earth, I fear,
And not from heav'n, those cloudy cares are
drawn.

Mitb. No matter whence—they're dangerous
to partake:—

The tender face of beauty cannot bear me:
For, if from earth they come, their damp will
stifle;

And, if from heav'n, their influence is blasting.

Mon. Were you but kind, my lord, as once
you were,

What blasting cou'd I fear? what dangers,
drest

In all the horrors of most dreadful death?—

But you are pleas'd that I shou'd not complain.

Andr. Semandra, by your Majesty's appointment,

Attends without.

Mitb. Fair Monima, retire!

You will oblige me by a confidence

I cannot be, but your's.—Affairs of State

Now take me from you.

Mon. Say, the affairs of Love.

I wou'd, my royal lord, but cannot, blame you:

I feel a spirit within me, which calls up

All that is woman wrong'd, and bids me chide;

But you are Mithridates, that dear man

Whom my soul loves;—else, were you all the

Kings,

All Worlds, ail Gods, I cou'd let loose upon
you,

For those deep injuries which I must suffer;

Cou'd, like the fighting winds, disturb all

Nature

With venting of my wrongs;—but I am hush'd

As a spent wave, and all my fiery powers

Are quench'd, when I but look upon your eyes;

Where, like a star in water, I appear

A pretty sight, but of no influence,

And am at best but now a shining sorrow !

[*Exit, led by Pharnaces.*]

Mith. O love! if that the face of such affection,

Such modest sweetness, and such humble virtue,
As my Queen bears, fix not my wand'ring heart,
Break, break thy bow, and burn thy useless
arrows!

By heav'n, her kindness strikes my troubled
soul!——

Enter SEMANDRA, with ANDRAVAR attending.

But see, she's lost again!...Semandra comes,
Who dawns like blushing noon her paler dawn,
And shows like summer to the infant spring!
Semandra, what still weeping? will not all
The wealth which the sun sees throughout the
east

Dry up your tears? methinks an empire might
Suffice for any loss. I give you all my power;
And, with it, such a heart, as nought but love
Cou'd bow:—I throw it bleeding at your feet.
Behold, behold, Semandra, while I blush,
The great effects of your commanding beauty!

Sem. Were you yet greater than you are—
which scarce

The Gods can make you,—tho' no bounds but
heav'n

Did limit your large sway;—though in your
person all

The graces met that ever man adorn'd,

The blush of rising youth, the conquering eyes,
The noble smiles, and those most passionate
beauties

Which drew my heart to idolize your son,—
I cou'd not love you.

Mitb. Oh, unmerciful!

Sem. You said, my lord, but now,
You blush'd to think of your degraded power:—
How then ought I to blush? I, who shou'd be
The daily curse of your repining subjects?
I, who am bound by oaths and solemn vows
To love Ziphares? by my father's order,
And by the tenderest inclination, too?

Mitb. You strike me dead!

Sem. Oh, do but think, my lord!
How wou'd mankind, when they shall read my
story,
Tear all the rolls, or throw 'em to the flames!
How wou'd the weeping maids curse my re-
membrance,
Shou'd I for pride of power, a golden promise,
A gaudy nothing, prove ungrateful, perjur'd!
Leave all the goodness of the earth to languish,
And break for ever with his matchless virtue!

Mitb. You have said; and I confess it to be
heav'nly:

I know, and till I saw your eyes, I lov'd,
The virtue of my son; I lodg'd him near
My heart, and set him down my successor;
But now, Oh hear, and wonder at your power!
'Spite of his noble acts, tho' to his arm

I owe my life, tho' justice speaks so loud,
And the soft tongue of Nature pleads so well,
I hate him more than I did ever love him!

Sem. Alas! wou'd I had died when first you
saw me!

Mitb. Had he conspir'd my death, usurp'd
my throne,
Perhaps I might have doom'd him to be slain,
Yet sure I shou'd have wept to see him die;
But now, since he must ravish that lov'd gem
I prize above the world, tearing you from me,
Giving me twenty deaths, and cutting through
My very soul, shou'd I my empire give
To buy his fate, I'd think it vastly sold.

Sem. Then blasted be the form that charm'd
your eyes!
His fate! Oh Gods!—then you design his death,
To reap the bloody harvest of his life,
And Atreus-like, to feed on your own bowels?
But know, proud Monarch, there are Powers
who see
And punish crimes like your's; nor can I doubt
But they will save from your most impious rage
My poor lov'd lord, the innocent Ziphares.

[Weeping.]

Mitb. Those waters more enrage my jealous
flame,
And those heav'd sighs but spread my anger's
wings.
Your fatal kindness hastens on his death;
And that untimely doom which I forbore

To execute, seems necessary now:

You give him all your stock of richest love,
Your tears, your longing looks, your smiles,
your groans,

And over-bless him with your lavish kindness;
But niggardly to me, you will not spare

A pitying glance, one pearly drop, to ransom
The soul of the despairing Mithridates!—

Andravar, go, and bear the Prince to prison!

Sem. Stay, Andravar! the King has call'd you
back:—

See, he repents:—Nay, I must hold you then,
And, if you stir, you take Semandra with you.
O Mithridates! O ungrateful Prince!

What was it you did order? But behold,
His eyes are fix'd upon the ground:—he blushes
To think he cou'd so monstrously decree
To murder the sweet hopes of all his kingdoms!
The Gods be prais'd for this serene repentance!
Yet, with the fright, I fear I shall not sleep
Till death does close my eyes.

Mitb. O rise, Semandra!

Sem. Never! I never will!

Oh, all you pitying Powers! will not my cries
And piercing woes move you to melt his soul?
Can you be deaf? O cruel Mithridates!
Did you but know the workings you have made,
The heavy plight, the panting passions here,—
If you had but a grain of all that world
Of love, you swore you once had for Semandra,—
You cou'd not see me thus!—Misery distracts

My reason!---shou'd you turn to a new rage,
(Which, I must fear, unless you vow to save
him)

I cou'd not bear it:---you shou'd see me fall
Cold, pale, and with my death's convulsions
grasping

Your water'd feet, but never more to rise.

Mith. Give me your beauteous hand:—I swear
upon it,

By all those Powers we worship, by our self,
When e'er Ziphares dies, Semandra kills him!
She shall alone have power to give him death,
Or to recal his most untimely fate.

Enter ZIPHARES and ARCHELAUS.

Thus dearly do I buy the red impression
Which my lips make;—but take it, take it from
me!

My blood boils up again, my spirits kindle,
That lovely brand has lent my wishes flame,
And I am lost again in vast desire!

Zipb. Semandra! live I once to see thee more,
Tho' in my father's arms? 'Tis heav'n, to gaze
On thy exalted honour; thus to see thee;
Thus tempted from me with the charms of
empire,

Yet not consenting! No, I'll not think the world,
Laid at thy feet,

Cou'd win thy faith!

Yet, O dread Sir, forgive me:

If that my boding heart suspects you more,

Than all that heav'n cou'd send down great and
charming,

Or hell cou'd raise up horrid to destroy me.

Mitb. O Glory!—

Arch. O consider, Sir, on that!

Think how the Romans will despise your wars.
If love now drive you!—Speak, my lord!—he
yields!—

Zipb. Oh, royal Sir, or if the name of father
Can move you more, by that I will conjure you—
By all the charms of Stratonice's eyes,
When first they drew you to adore their lustre!
By all the pains you gave her when she bore me!
By all the obedience I have paid you long!
And by the blood I yet intend to lose
In your behalf—O grant me my Semandra!

Sem. Ev'n by the passion my unhappy beauty
First kindled in you, but I hope is dying,
Give me Ziphares!—give him to my longings!

Mitb. 'Tis done;—the conquest is at last ob-
tain'd,

And manly Virtue lords it o'er my passion.—
It shall be so:—away, thou feeble God!
I banish thee my bosom!—hence, I say!—
Begone, or I will tear the strings that hold thee,
And stab thee in my heart! The wars come on:—
By heav'n, I'll drown thy laughing deity
In blood, and drive thee with my brandish'd
sword

To Rome!—I will!—yes, to the Capitol!—
There to resume thy Godhead once again,

And vaunt thy majesty without controul,
But never reign in Mithridates' soul.

Arch. O wonderful effect of highest virtue!
O conquest, which deserves more triumphs than
A hundred victories in battle gain'd!

Zipb. You must, you shall be now the Lord
of Rome!

Her fate shall bow beneath your awful sceptre!
O let me not enjoy the life you promis'd,
The vast possession of the rich Semandra,
If I strike not Rome's eagles to the earth,
Take the Imperial standard, chase their legions,
And bring in triumph all their leaders bound!

Mith. Andravar, haste, proclaim throughout
the city

My son Ziphares General against the Romans.

[*Exit Andravar.*

Come to my breast once more, my dearest son!
In spite of love, thou art again my child:
Thus, with a father's bowels, I receive thee,
Thus, melting o'er thee with the tend'rest nature,
I pray the Gods to crown thy youth with glory!

Zipb. Oh happiness! Oh joy! Oh blessed
tears!

Reward this goodness, heav'n! for poor Zi-
phares

Is now so lost, he knows not what to say.

Let me devour your hands with filial dearness!—

Were my whole life to come one heap of
troubles,

pleasure of this moment wou'd suffice,

And sweeten all my griefs with its remembrance.

Sem. Oh happy hour! if I not set thee down
The whitest that the eye of Time e'er saw,
Let me ne'er smile when I remember thee,
Nor ev'n in wishes offer at a joy!

[*Shouting within.*

Mitb. Hark! with loud cries the soldiers send
their joys:

Go then, with the best blessings I can give thee,
Conduct my chearful subjects to the field;
Take all the sighing virgins wishes with thee;
Subdue the Consul, and receive Semandra!

Zipb. O do not doubt me, my most royal
lord!

If now I conquer not, thus help'd, thus promis'd,
Thus prais'd, encourag'd, and thus over-blest,
I am the mark for all

The synod of the Gods to shoot their fires at!

Mitb. Semandra! veil your beauties from my
eyes:

I wou'd not trust their influence, tho', I thank
The Pow'rs above, so strongly reigns my virtue,
I think I might, and fear not a relapse.

In an apartment proper for your grief,
You shall be plac'd, till you and my Ziphares
Return in triumph; where no eyes shall see
Your private walks, nor mark your secret sorrow.

I thus divide you, that your meeting may
Be yet more grateful. Haste, my son, to battle!
Be short in parting, for there is no end

Of lovers' farewells! The Powers above pre-
serve you!

[*Exit Mith. with Pelop. and Andra,*
Zipb. Farewel, Semandra! O, if my fathen
shou'd

Fall back from virtue,—'tis an impious thought,
Yet I must ask you—cou'd you, in my absence,
Solicited by power and charming empire,
And threaten'd too by death, forget your vows?
Cou'd you, I say, abandon poor Ziphares,
Who, midst of wounds and death, wou'd think
on you,

And, whatsoe'er calamity shou'd come,
Wou'd keep his love sacred to his Semandra,
Like balm to heal the heaviest misfortune?

Sem. Your cruel question tears my very soul:
Ah! can you doubt me, Prince? A faith like
mine,

The softest passion that e'er woman wept,
But as resolv'd as ever man cou'd boast?
Alas! why will you then suspect my truth?
Yet, since it shows the fearfulness of love,
'Tis just I shou'd endeavour to convince you:—
Make bare your sword, my noble father, draw!

Arch. What wou'dst thou now?

Sem. I swear upon it! O,
Be witness, heav'n, and all avenging Powers,
Of the true love I give the Prince Ziphares!
When I in thought forsake my plighted faith,
Much less, in act, for empire change my love,
May this keen sword, by my own father's hand

Be guided to my heart, rip veins and arteries,
And cut my faithless limbs from this hack'd
body,

To feed the ravenous birds, and beasts of prey !

Arch. Now, by my sword, 'twas a good hearty
wish !

And, if thou play'st him false, this faithful
hand

As heartily shall make thy wishes good.

Zipb. O hear mine too ! If e'er I fail in ought
That love requires in strictest, nicest, kind,

May I not only be proclaim'd a coward,
But be in deed that most detested thing !

May I, in this most glorious war I make,
Be beaten basely, ev'n by Glabrio's slaves !

And for a punishment lose both these eyes,

Yet live, and never more behold Semandra !

[*Trumpets.*

Arch. Come, no more wishing :—Hark, the
trumpets call !

Sem. Preserve him, Gods, preserve his inno-
cence—

The noblest image of your perfect selves !

Farewel !—I'm lost in tears.—Where are you,
Sir ?

Arch. He's gone. Away, my lord !—you'll
never part.

Zipb. I go ; but must turn back for one last
look :

Remember, O remember, dear Semandra,
That on thy virtue all my fortune hangs !

Semandra is the bus'ness of the war ;
Semandra makes the fight, draws every sword ;
Semandra sounds the trumpets, gives the word :
So the moon charms her wat'ry world below,
Wakes the still seas, and makes 'em ebb and
flow. [Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Field. Enter ZIPHARES bloody, with Soldiers.

Zipbares.

ARE these, are these the masters of the world?
O my brave friends, how have you fought to-
day !

You fought, as if you all had mistresses,
Who from some battlement beheld your valour,
And from your arms expected all their fortune:
Oh, had you heard 'em clap their tender hands,
Beat their white breasts, and rend the wond'ring
heav'ns

With their shrill cries, you cou'd not have done
more :

Your looks were basilisks to Roman blood ;
Your very breath was as the furious North,
And drove the legions, like the chaff, before you !
Nor was I idle ; witness the wounds I feel :
Tho' Glabrio, at distance, shunn'd the force
Of my far-darted javelin, yet it struck
A tribune down, and did not useless fall.

What more remains, but that we haste to meet
Victorious Archelaus, plunder their tents,
And loaded with the laurels we have won,
March to Sinope, shouting all the way,
“ Long live the King of Kings, great Mithri-
dates !”

Enter ARCHELAUS, attended.

Arch. O Prince, thou life, thou soul, of all the
army !

To whose dear hand thrice I did owe my life,
When thrice this day my horse was kill'd be-
neath me !

O renown'd day ! this one day of thy valour
Has drown'd in dark oblivion all my wars :
Like time itself thy glory shall run on,
While mine, my fifty iron-years of battle,
Lies smear'd in dust, and moulders into ashes !

Zipb. Yes, father, now I cou'd grow proud of
conquest,

Since it must give your daughter to my arms.
Methought to-day, when I had given the word,
Semandra victory declar'd herself,
Ere yet a death by any hand was given :
Ev'n now my blood more heats my youthful
veins,

My cheeks grow redder, with the expectation
Of love's dear promis'd joys, than when I strove
In flame of fight, with all my toil upon me,
To cut my way, and win the famous field.

Arch. Grant me, you Gods, before the hand
of death.

Comes, like eternal night with her dark wing,
To bar the comfortable light for ever
From these my aged eyes—O let me see
A grandchild of my Prince's sacred blood,
To call him mine, to feel him in my arms,
To hear his innocent talk, and see him smile,
While I tell stories of his father's valour,
Which he in time must learn to imitate!
Grant me but this, you Gods, and make an end,
Soon as you please, of this old happy man!

Zipb. I feel a gladness light'ning in my breast;
The kindled joy disperses quickly through me,
And says, "Ere yet the setting sun has quench'd
" His love in his cold mistress' bed,
" Semandra shall be mine—ev'n all Semandra!"
The thought is ecstasy! these arms shall hold her
Fast to my throbbing breast; these ravish'd eyes
Gaze till they're blind, with looking on her
blushes;

These stifling lips shall smother all her smiles,
And follow her with such pursuit of kisses,
That ev'n our souls shall lose themselves in
pleasure!

Arch. First, send a flying messenger, with
news

Of our great victory.

Zipb. Ziphares self

Must be the harbinger of his own joy:—
I'll go, with the best-mounted cavalry,

While you behind conduct, on easy march,
 The wearied army. Once more let me lock
 My father thus! [*Embracing Archelaus.*

Arch. My heart bodes happiness.

Zipb. 'Twere sin to doubt; since Fortune had
 no hand

In what our swords by dint of valour won:

She to the brave was ever a curst foe;

But-I at last have bound her to my chariot,

By conquering Virtue to be dragg'd along;

And while her broken wheel is proudly borne,

She shall be forc'd our triumph to adorn.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

*The Palace-Garden. Enter PHARNACES and
 ANDRAVAR.*

Andr. Then there is hope, my lord, th' un-
 settled King

May yet relapse, and fall to love again?

Pbar. 'Tis certain, that the end will crown
 our wishes.

Late, as I pry'd about Semandra's gardens,

Mad that our plot of ground, so plough'd to bear,

Shou'd yield no fruit, still thoughtful how to
 work him,

And watching for some accident to fit

Our purpose, and redeem the last design,

I chanc'd to spy the fair Semandra sleeping;

But, in that posture, she appear'd so lovely,
 Bold as I am, she charm'd me into wonder:
 But straight thy General came to rescue me,
 Who took the hint immediately, and went
 To see the King.

Andr. I guess the good design,—
 To draw him on to see our beauteous foe.

Pbar. You have it; and 'tis more than half
 effected.

I saw 'em walk:—Pelopidas, by his action,
 I know did kindle him with wond'rous praise,
 But once to view the bright Semandra sleeping;
 But the King stopt, as if he fear'd to go;
 Then side-long glanc'd, and sigh'd, and walk'd
 again,
 Rubbing his hand upon his face, to hide
 The rising blushes:—but, behold 'em here!

Enter MITHRIDATES and PELOPIDAS.

Mitb. What are her charms to me?

Pelop. 'Tis true, they are not;
 And yet, methinks, the sight might draw down
 Jove—

Yet, I'd not ask you, for the world, to see her,
 But that I think you're master of your promise:
 I thought your god-like frame, your strength of
 mind

Not to be shook; therefore I woo'd you, Sir,
 In curiosity, to see a wonder;
 But, if you doubt yourself—

Mitb. I think I need not:

I think my virtue is resolv'd;—but yet,
I fear—and therefore I will go no farther.

Pelop. 'Tis well resolv'd; and yet, methinks,
'twou'd raise

Your pity, more than love, to see the tears
Force through her snowy lids their melting
course,

To lodge themselves on her red murm'ring lips,
That talk such mournful things; when straight,
a gale

Of starting sighs carries those pearls away,
As dews, by winds, are wafted from the flowers.

Mitb. 'Tis wond'rous pitiful! by Heav'n, it is!
I feel her sorrow working here:—it calls
Fire to my breast, and water to my eyes.—
And, if I durst—

Pelop. If you the least suspect
Your temper,—if the smallest breath of love
But stir your heart,—let me conjure you, Sir,
Not to go on: the dazzling meteor will
Disturb your quiet, and confound your reason.

Mitb. 'Twill be as well—tho' I believe no power
Can change my virtue—yet 'twill be as well
If you relate exactly what you saw.

Pelop. Behold her, then, upon a flow'ry bank,
With her soft sorrows lull'd into a slumber;
The summer's heat had, to her natural blush,
Added a brighter, and more tempting red;
The beauties of her neck and naked breasts,
Lifted by inward starts, did rise and fall
With motion that might put a soul in statues;

The matchless whiteness of her folded arms,
That seem'd t' embrace the body whence they
grew,

Fix'd me to gaze o'er all that field of love;
While to my ravish'd eyes officious winds,
Waving her robes, display'd such handsome
limbs,

As artists wou'd in polish'd marble give
The wanton Goddess, when supinely laid
She charms her gallant God to new enjoyment.

Mitb. Something there is stirs mightily my
breast;—

'Tis pity, sure—it can be only pity!
Who knows, but that her multiplying fears,
And cruel griefs, in time, may give her death?
'Twere most inhuman therefore not to go,
And comfort her, with praises of Ziphæres:
I'll tell her how he conquers, how he comes
Triumphant from the Consul's overthrow,
To take the noble wreaths he has deserv'd,—
Embraces from her arms!—circles more rich
Than all the crowns my fruitless valour won!
Yet, stay;—I will not speak of him:—'twere rude
To break her rest;—I'll see her, when she wakes.

Pelop. Then you dare trust your heart?

Mitb. 'Tis sure I dare:

By heav'n, my friend, I dare:—I feel such strong
Collected manly virtue, that I'll on.

Pelop. Oh, sacred Sir, turn back! if, con-
quer'd by

Her beauties, you shou'd love again, I know

Pelopidas must bear the blame of all;—

Therefore, my lord—

Mith. Away! by Heav'n, I'll go!

Pelop. Oh, 'tis impossible, if once you lov'd
But you must certainly relapse;
Therefore your fearful servant kneels, and begs
You wou'd turn back:—alas, he's conscious now
What a gross fault his foolish tongue committed,
By tempting unawares your reason forth!

Mith. I'll see her; yes, it is resolv'd, I'll see
her,
With all that world of charms thou hast de-
scrib'd—

Therefore arise, and lead the way!

Pelop. Alas,
My lord, I fear you! but it is your pleasure,
And I'm your slave.

Mith. Reply not, but obey!

[*Exeunt Mith. Pelop.*]

Pbar. I feel a pleasant expectation breeding:
His starts, his stops:—by Mars, he loves her still!
Join then the much prevailing circumstance
Of time and place—the absence of my brother—
To make guilt bold:—the liveness of her man-
sion:—

Both strong incentives to a violent lover.

Andr. Then love has blest you on the other
hand,

Since, by our subtle practices, we brought
Monima to disgrace; with whom you may
Divert, till we have gain'd our full revenge:

I have the guard of her.

Pbar. I'm glad thou hast.

Then, to complete the ruin of Ziphares,
I hear his mother, fearful of th' event
Of this long war, and loving him as life,
With Pompey holds priyate intelligence,
And has, to Rome, giv'n all those castles up,
Which she had charge of, to preserve her son.

Andr. This, when occasion calls, I'll aggrava-
vate,

To mad your father more. But see, the General

Enter PELOPIDAS.

Pelop. He's gone—he's ruin'd!—quite transported with

The ecstacy of love!—I left him kneeling
Close to her side, winding about his heart
Such nets of beauty, as must hold him fast;
Therefore, when he approaches us for comfort,
Showing his griefs, and seeking shroud for guilt,
Let us encourage, to our utmost power,
Whate'er his violent love dares put in act.

Enter MITHRIDATES.

Mith. Torment of heart! Oh, feeble virtue,
hence!

I blow thee from the palace to the cottage,
With thy lean recompence of endless labour!
For me, since I have burst th' ungrateful chain
That held me to thee like a shackled slave,
I will enjoy what e'er the Gods have given,

And surfeit on the beauties of Semandra.
Oh, my dear son, my best, my own Pharnaces !
By heav'n, thou never didst oppose my pleasure,
As does Ziphares !—but I'll cast him out,
That bosom-wolf, who laps my dearest blood,
And lodge thee there !—thou wilt not rack me
thus.

Pbar. The Gods forbid ! But why, Sir, will
you bear it ?

Pelop. I cou'd not think you lov'd her at this
rate ;
Therefore I hope forgotten virtue yielded
To bolder pleasures, and you quench'd your
fires.

Mith. Drawn by resistless love, I put one
knee

To earth, and gently bowing down my head,
First took at distance the sweet-wafted breath ;
Which blew my flames to such a raging height,
That straight I fell upon her balmy lips,
And glew'd my own so fiercely, that she wak'd,
And, starting up, soon vanish'd from my sight !
Leaving me dumb, pale, languishing, and dying,
Rent with her charms, distracted with the rage
Of my desires, and torn with cruel love !

Pelop. Why stopt you there ? I wou'd have
follow'd her
Into her inmost closet.—Pardon me,
If I prove passionate to see you thus :—
Better a million of such slight-soul'd things
Were ravish'd, massacred, than Mithridates

Suffer one moment's care!

Pbar. I have no patience.

By your great glory, 'twas not nobly done:
I'th' midst of groans, and cries, and gushing
tears,

I wou'd have ravish'd her!—your royal hand,
Lock'd in her amber hair, shou'd then have
forc'd her:—

Who knows, but opposition mounts the joy?
Like that Athenian tyrant, who ne'er took
His barge for pleasure, but in highest storms;
Then wou'd he stand like Neptune on his deck,
And laugh to see the dolphins back the billows!

Andr. Say but the word, I'll fetch her from
the altar

To your embraces!—never did I see
So strange an alteration:—your fierce eye,
Which, like the sun at noon, none cou'd behold
But with a snatch of light, and then be dazzled,
Now, like a cold and drowsy winter star,
Bears a bleak brightness. O decay of lustre!

Mith. I am not as I was.—Ha! whence this
noise?

[*shout within.*

[*Exit Pelop. and Andra.*

Pbar. My lord, this passion has unmann'd
you quite:

Forgetful of the glorious fields you won,
You lose your dear-bought honours in a day,
And sell your fame to your ambitious son!
The coward Glabrio, whom by flying agents
I hear in diyers shirmishes he vanqu sh'd,

Has swell'd him so, and blown him to that height,

He rides upon the shoulders of his army!
They heave him, as he were a God, in air,
And dance before him, shouting in their songs,
You are their Saturn, but the Prince their Jove,
All that their waning faith can give ambition;—
And he too laughs, to hear the thund'ring titles!

Mitb. And, for a recompence, shall I bestow
Upon this traitor all I love on earth?

No, my Pharnaces, I have mark'd him dead,
If that Semandra's loss can bring his ruin!

Not but the thought I go with shows me just
To what she shall appear: the noble wile
Kills by her seeming infidelity.

Monima too must perish—for dishonour;
But rather, to make way for my new love,
And fix the giddy people on my side. [*Shouts again.*
Again these shouts?

Pbar. I guess Ziphares comes.

Mitb. Down, struggling nature!
Die, die, thou ravisher of my repose!
Be strangled in me all remorse, all thoughts
Of pity! Yet I will be calmly cruel,
Nor shall he find the depth of my revenge!

Enter ANDRAVAR.

Andr. Your son has conquer'd, mightiest of
Kings!

But by a way so infamously base,

I fear my doom will scarce be less than death
For the relation.

Mitb. Monstrous may it be !
For I so hate him now, I wish for crimes
Of deepest grain, for colour to his fate !

Andr. His royal mother, the false Stratonice,
To whom you gave in custody Inora,
The strongest, richest fort of all the East,
Ere he with Glabrio join'd, to Rome did yield
That wondrous mass of treasure, with her
honour.

Mitb. Curst state of Monarchs ! let the judg-
ing world
Now weigh our pleasures with our mightier
troubles,
And find us happier than the rest of men !
False beauty, thou shalt die, thou bane of
greatness !

Or, if I cannot reach thy fickle being,
I'll punish thee by ruining Ziphares !

Andr. This have I learnt by frequent mes-
sengers,
Who warrant with their lives, how by consent
Glabrio but skirmish'd with the Prince your
son,
And was by Stratonice brib'd before.

Mitb. Plots, treasons ! horrid—black conspi-
racies !
Mother and son—O parricides !—combine !
But if you 'scape me, may I sleep my reign out !

Enter PELOPIDAS.

What says Pelopidas?—What of Ziphares?
Bring'st thou more matter for my curses?
Speak!

Pelop. He comes, my lord, and with a port
so proud,
As if he had subdu'd the spacious world!
And all Sinope's streets are fill'd with such
A glut of people, you wou'd think some God
Had conquer'd in their cause, and they thus
rank'd,
That he might make his entrance on their heads!
While from the scaffolds, windows, tops of
houses,
Are cast such gaudy show'rs of garlands down,
That ev'n the croud appear like conquerors,
And the whole city seems like one vast meadow,
Set all with flowers, as a clear heav'n with stars!
Mitb. Ungrateful slaves! by Mars, when I
return'd,

Worn with the hardship of a ten-years war,
My armies heavy-gaited, bruis'd, and hack'd,
With cutting Roman lives,
They ne'er receiv'd me with a pomp like this!

Pelop. Nay, as I heard, ere he the city enter'd,
Your subjects lin'd the ways for many furlongs!
The very trees bore men! and as our God,
When from the portal of the east he dawns,
Beholds a thousand birds upon the boughs,
To welcome him with all their warbling throats,
And prune their feathers in his golden beams,—

So did your subjects, in their gaudiest trim,
Upon the pendant branches, speak his praise!
Mothers, who cover'd all the banks beneath,
Did rob their crying infants of the breast,
Pointing Ziphares out to make 'em smile!
And climbing boys stood on their fathers'
shoulders,

Answering their shouting sires with tender cries,
To make the concert up of general joy!

Mith. What, will you bear your part too?
Oh the Gods!

He is transported with the ample theme,
And plays the orator! plagues rot thy tongue,
And blasted be the lungs that breath'd his wel-
come!

Perish the bodies that went forth to meet him,
A prey for worms, to stink in hollow ground!
O viper! villain! not content to take
My love, but life! wilt thou unthrone me too?
Shall Mithridates live to be depos'd?
A stale, the image of what once he was?
The very ghost of his departed greatness?
A thing for slaves to be familiar with,
To gape, to nod, and sleep in my scorn'd face?
Awake, awake, thou sluggard majesty!
Rouse thee to act! tho' all the elements,
Tho' heav'n and hell, subjects and sons, con-
spire,

With fate thy empire falls!—oppose their will,
Dare to the last, and be a monarch still! [*Exit.*]

Pelop. What think you now?

Pbar. I think, for my revenge,
For any act that witty horror asks,
Thou art an instrument so black and fit,
The furies join'd in council cou'd not match
thee!

But see, Ziphares comes:—with what a train
Of priests! nay, then the God must be adored!

SCENE II.

*ZIPHARES' triumph. A street full of pageants,
crouded with people, who from the windows fling
down garlands: others dance before him, while
the priests sing: ZIPHARES resting under a ca-
nopy of state.*

Zipb. Enough, my friends, my noble coun-
trymen!

I am indebted to your bounties ever!
But let me now conjure you, cease the noise
Of your loud thanks, lest we disturb the King:—
We're near the palace, and my boding heart
Says he interprets rudely this our triumph,
Which you, against my will, have forc'd upon
me:

Therefore Ziphares begs you to retire.
By the small victories my arms have gain'd,
If you have any love, as much you show,
Let me intreat you all, by that affection,
Ev'n now, upon this instant, to disband!

All. Long live our King, and noble Prince
Ziphares! [Exeunt shouting.]

Pbar. Welcome, Ziphares, welcome to Sinope!
Still, when fate calls thee forth, may'st thou
return,

Thus swell'd, thus lord triumphant o'er the
Romans!

Zipb. Had I subdu'd the world, I should detest
The title of triumpher, and scarce think
That man my friend, who praises at your rate.

Pelop. Had not the monster multitude receiv'd
you, Sir,

With such a monstrous state, methinks,
Like Hercules, you shou'd have slain the Hydra!

Andr. Heard you but, Sir, how, with hun-
dred mouths,

It worshipp'd, as you were already crown'd,—
“ Long live our King, the noble Prince Zi-
phares ?”

Zipb. What, villains! ha! Gods, have I flesh
and bear it?

Pharnaces, off!—by my just wrath, they die!

[*Exeunt Pel. and Andr.*]

Pbar. The King! remember how this rage
will sound.

Zipb. O the curst traitors!—brother, beware
of 'em—

Howe'er they crouch at present to your for-
tune—

For I perceive your favour warm'd the snakes
To stir—they have no sense of gratitude.

I found 'em base, and therefor did discard 'em:
For which the slaves have sworn me mortal hate ;

But if I live I'll crush 'em.

Pbar. You'll to the King?

Zipb. I will. Methinks this meeting was unlucky:—

My heart misgives me more, and higher beats
With this last heat, than all the toil of war.

Perhaps they move the King;—but sure not
much:

Or if they do, tho' our great father frowns,
One smile, one tear of joy from my Semandra,
Will wash the anger of the Gods away! [*Exit.*

Pbar. Go, and the welcome that I wish, attend thee!

Of all my elder brothers, he remains
To cross my hopes, and 'bar me from the
crown!

Whom yet I doubt not, by my engine's help,
To burst in sunder, and then gild my brows!
Methinks I shou'd become the golden-hoop
That circles in one quarter of the globe:—
I have it just;—my sceptre waving thus,
The starting Princes run to clear my way.

*Enter MITHRIDATES, SEMANDRA, PELOPIDAS,
ANDRAVAR, with Guards.*

But hold—my father comes, with sad Semandra!
Weep on! while I go laugh my cares away
With Monima, who must or yield or die. [*Exit.*

Mib. Has not the traitor won my subjects'
hearts?

Has not his mother basely, too, betray'd me?
Has he not dar'd to triumph without leave?
Which, when my faithful'st, worthiest coun-
sellors

Rebuk'd him for, with mild and gentle lan-
guage,

He redden'd with proud anger, drew his sword;
Then, like a monstrous parricide, came on
Here, to my palace, heading the wild crowd,
So through the bodies of my friends to pass,
Till with his barb'rous hand he reach'd my
bosom.

Sem. 'Tis false—'tis all most horrid perjury!
And the curs'd spotted souls of these vile traitors
Shall burn for this beneath! I know they hate
The gallant Prince, and now conspire against
him.

With words, made up with all the blasts of hell,
They strike your sacred ears,—bewitch your
senses;

And with those spells that foulest treason
hatch'd,

Stagger your royal reason.—O yet hear me!

Mith. From what I have decreed, no charm,
no power,

No eloquence,—not Mercy's self, adorn'd
In all Semandra's beauties, in her tears,
Prostrate upon the earth, and hanging on
My knees, nay, dying with her grief,—shall
move me!

Sem. I now believe you are not to be mov'd:—

Therefore, with my undaunted innocence
I stand to hear the doom you have decreed.

Mitb. If, when Ziphares, at your first appearance,

Runs to your arms, fir'd with expected joys,
You thrust him not away, and slight him strangely,

With all the marks of the most proud disdain,
That a most faithless and ambitious woman
Cou'd show to gain the empire of the world,
He shall be stabb'd, be murder'd by my guards,
Before your eyes !

Sem. O, 'tis not possible,
That you can mean the dreadful things you speak!—

You speak it but to try the poor Semandra.

Mitb. Mark me most heedfully—for 'tis most true:—

And sooner shall a dooming God recall
His Stygian oath, than I renounce my vow.—
He dies, I say, if you receive him not
With all the coldness of a fair apostate,
Whose chastity the poison of sweet power
Had brought to ruin, whose protested faith
The charms of empire had quite turn'd to air!

Sem. Gods, do you hear the tyrant?

Mitb. Do you hear me?

If to your words, which must make plain your falsehood,

Your looks shou'd give the lie, by amorous glances,

And languishings, (for lovers eyes will talk);
Or, as you speak your hate, mixt sighs arise,
Or fault'ring speech, or any other mark,
To show that you are forc'd to what you say;—
Then, from the place where I shall stand conceal'd,

I'll give the signal to my waiting guards,
Who, in a moment, shall destroy your lover,
When all your tears and sighs shall not recall him.

Sem. I'll die, I'll die—ten thousand deaths I'll die—

Rather than meet him thus! what, after all
The dreadful imprecations that I made him,
And swore upon my father's sword, a faith,
A spotless love, for ever to endure,—
Shall I abjure my oaths, and to his face
Protest a falsehood, and belie my heart?

Mith. Take your own course—I have sworn.

Sem. O Tyranny!

What, shall I meet him after all his hardships,
After the heats and colds, and smarting wounds,
Which, for my sake, he patiently endur'd,
Still chearing up himself, that after all
The blood he lost, he shou'd enjoy Semandra,—
His gentle mistress one day shou'd reward him,
For the long mischiefs of a cruel war?

Mith. I have not leisure now to hear complaints:—

Either resolve t'obey, and speedily,
Or you and I must never see him more.

Sem. Stay, royal Sir, come back!—ne'er see him more!—

And if I die, rather than see him thus,
Will you not save his life?

Mitb. Your death, Semandra!
The very mention hastens on his fate.

Sem. Alas, alas! I fear, if I but look
As if I knew him not, or had forgot him,
So nice and tender is his love,
So soft his disposition, 'twill be fatal!

Mitb. Then you resolve his death?

Sem. It cannot be:—

No, I will see him, tho' I must be cruel!
But 'bate a little of your imposition:—
An unkind word will kill the poor Ziphares,
As sure as all the hate which you injoin me.

Enter ISMENES.

Ismen. The Prince Ziphares begs admittance of
Your Majesty.

Mitb. You must retire, Semandra!

Sem. O torment! O the racks of love distress
Like mine!—of passion at a loss like mine!
Help me, you Gods, or I shall faint with bearing!
[*Exit.*

Mitb. Call in the Prince!—What, Nature, yet
again?

I charge thee trouble my repose no more!

Enter ZIPHARES.

Zipb. 'Tis well, you Powers that pry into our
hearts!

Well have I lost my dearest blood in battle,
Since once again I see my royal father.

Mith. Ziphares, rise ! I hear you have fought
well—

Too well perhaps for Mithridates' peace :—
You triumph'd too, I hear.

Zipb. Alas, my lord,
I fear Pelopidas and Andravar
Have been too busy with your ear.
By my best hopes, by your most sacred life,
I wou'd not triumph till your orders came—
At least, they told me, that they came from you:
If they were false—

Mith. They were your friends who brought
Those orders ;—therefore you are not in fault ;
Nor ought you share the crimes of Stratonice,

Zipb. Of Stratonice ! ah, what has she done ?
Ah, Sir, what villain hath traduc'd my mother ?
Give me to know—

Mith. Perhaps you're ignorant :—
Wou'd I had been so too !—but to the purpose.
I promis'd, when the Consul was o'ercome,
To give Semandra to you :—Seem not sad :—
You love your father well ; but Prince, I know
Your passion for Semandra is the highest.—
I'll send her too you, if you please retain her.

[*Exit.*

Zipb. Is this then thy reward, unnecessary
virtue ?

Why do we wear thee thus to our undoing ?
O inauspicious stars ! thy father hates thee,
Because thou art too good ! went it not so ?

I fought too well! his eye disdain'd me too,
And held my high desert at hateful distance!
But, let it be:—there's satisfaction still
In innocence; and conscious glory tells me,
My griefs shall fly, like clouds, before Semandra!

Enter SEMANDRA.

But see, the sun, that drives 'em! O my star!
Thou day, that gild'st my little world of com-
fort!

Give me thy warmth! let me, upon thy bosom,
Breath all my victories! alas, the King,
My cruel father——ha! what now, Semandra?
Not fly into my arms? O all you Pow'rs
That nurs'd our tender loves, she turns away!
Hast thou too caught the coldness of my father?
Clear me, you Gods, and fix my understanding
To this one view, lest I mistake all measure,
And run to madness! What, not look upon me?
By heav'n, if thus, if thus I shou'd behold thee,
Tho' in a dream, 'twould make me wish to
sleep for ever!

O my dear life! thou shalt not hide thy kind-
ness!—

But to dissemble thus a moment longer,
Wou'd quite destroy the passionate Ziphares!
I'll force thy hand thus to my trembling lips.

Sem. The kiss you ravish, Prince, is dan-
gerous!

And let me now conjure you, by your love—
If you can love after what I enjoin you—

Upon your life, offer the like no more!

Zipb. O man me, Reason, with thy utmost force!

Or Passion, with the dreadful starts it makes,
Will soon divorce my soul from this weak body.
What hast thou said? and, ah! what have I
heard?

Fair, cruel, faithless, for the blood I lost,
Dost thou thus meet me? Raise thy eyes from
earth,

And tell me, have I—ah, have I deserv'd
This usage from my dear, ador'd Semandra?

Sem. You deserve all things—but you must
not ask

My love, unless you wish me most unhappy.

Zipb. O, you good Gods! is it then come to
this?

Shall I, shall I—but speak it once again!—
Unhappy! did'st thou, could'st thou say un-
happy?

Sem. I'd have you strive, my lord, to love me
less.

Zipb. If you wou'd have it so, be witness,
heav'n,

If for your quiet you enjoin me this,
I'll strive—but (oh!) 'tis most impossible!
Ah, may I not presume to ask, if this
The reason be, why I shou'd love you less—
That the too happy King may love you more?—
—Your silence does confirm Ziphares lost;
And all that I cou'd fear is come upon me!

Ah! barbarous king! I'll bear thy bonds no longer;

But cast off duty, as thou hast all love,
Thou bloody author of this wretched being!
Tyrant!—

Sem. Take heed, Ziphares, how you wrong
your father:

I've heard you give another character,
So diff'rent from this last, of Mithridates,
Methinks you scarce appear the same Ziphares
Whom once I knew.

Zipb. It is most sure I do not:
But, to convince me more, quite to complete
The cruel sum of all my desp'rate woes,
And sink me ever—what, madam, have you heard
Me say? or, rather, what is't you wou'd say,
In ill-tim'd praise, of this inhuman father?

Sem. Have I not heard you speak the tend'rest
things—

How, but for some few faults, so small that
scarce

The eye of Envy or of Hate cou'd find 'em,
He would be perfect as the Gods themselves?
A king so awful, that the Romans fear'd him?
A king, so merciful, Barbarians lov'd him?
A king—

Zipb. No more; I am confirm'd:—she's lost:
The King!—she's gone; the beauty of the earth,
All that in woman cou'd be virtue call'd,
Is lost—

Corrupted are her noble faculties;

The temper of her soul is quite infected;
Inconstancy, the plague that first or last
Taints the whole sex, the catching court disease,
Has spotted all her white, her virgin beauties.

Sem. You think me false—Ah! 'tis but just
you shou'd!

But, prince, I swear, I am not what you think me;
Yet never can be your's.

Zipb. O confusion!

Never!—O horror! never can be your's!
Thou tear'st my heart! call back those dreadful
words;

Tho' thou art going, yet thou art not gone:
Ah, ere it be too late, behold me gasping!
Come to my arms! oh leave me not for ever!
Fall on my bosom; I'll forget thy weakness,
Try to deceive myself with specious reasons,
Never upbraid thee that thou once wert false,
But with my tears wash all thy stains away.

Sem. Since tears (O help me heav'n!) are vain,
take, take my counsel,

Chear your sad heart, and grieve, oh! grieve no
more!

Zipb. Then thou art lost? resolv'd upon my
ruin?

Sem. Your life's too precious: I resolve a-
gainst it:—

Not for ten thousand worlds---what was I saying?
What shall I say?—Live, live, thou lost Ziphares!

Zipb. No, thou perfidious maid, thou wretched
beauty,

Ziphares loves thee still! so well he loves thee,
That he will die, to rid thee of a torment.
Where are thy vows? O think upon thy father!
How this will cut him, this thy cruel change,
And break his aged heart! or, ere he dies,
Think, if his kindled rage shou'd execute
What he has sworn, to hack thy beauteous limbs,
Tear thy false flesh into a thousand pieces——

Sem. If that were all my fear——

Zipb. What, harden'd! Oh! my stars!
So quickly perfect in the cursed trade?
I shall go mad with the imagination!
O heart! tho' heav'n had op'd the pregnant
clouds,

And teem'd with all the never-erring gods,
To swear, on earth, Semandra had been false—
Semandra had been false to her Ziphares—
I wou'd not have believ'd.

Sem. I cannot hear his grief, nor must I
cure it.

Farewel—O prince!—Instruct me, heav'n, to
save him!

Zipb. Stay thee: there's something, ere we
part for ever,
That I wou'd speak, if I cou'd make it way.

Sem. Speak then, and speak the mournful'st
things you can,
To break both hearts.

Zipb. Thou hast undone me: like a silver-frost,
Thou com'st upon the flower of all my youth,
To nip the tender bud, and blast my glory.

Yet I will live, Semandra, I will live,
To save thee from thy father's cruel rage :
For, wicked as thou art, with grief I feel
My soul looks after thee, and seeks thy safety.

Sem. I shall not hold ; I feel the climbing
grief :

My eyes grow full ; and I shall give him death.

Zipb. Farewel ! Thus, kneeling at thy feet, I
pour

These parting tears ; and sure, the happy king,
In pity will allow this dying kiss,
Which my cold lips print on thy faithless hand.
Oh, all my vows, for ever here I leave you !

And, since we never, never, must behold
Each other more, I'll breath 'em once again :—
Farewel, Semandra ! O, thou'lt never find,
In all thy search of love, a heart like mine !
Once more, farewel for ever, false Semandra !
What ! yet again thy name ? will my charm'd
tongue

Sound nothing but Semandra ? Oh, Semandra !

[*Exit.*

Enter MITHRIDATES, with Priests.

Sem. The cruel task is done ; and I can hold
No longer !—

Mith. Come back, Semandra ; empire, empire
calls thee ;

Open thy eyes to meet thy coming glory !

Sem. O barb'rous prince, may I not die in
quiet ?

Mitb. Talk not of dying ;—
See this holy man——

Sem. Holy, profane,
All things are now alike to my distraction.

Mitb. He instantly shall join your hand with
mine.

Sem. What means the tyrant ?

Mitb. You are now our Queen.

Sem. First let me seek a dragon in his den ;
Embrace an aspic ; curl with basilisks
Ere I give up this body, this poor beauty,
To any but my lord, the wrong'd Ziphares.

Mitb. I guess you wou'd not, by your free
consent ;

But I shall force, if you refuse to yield :
This moment I will take you in my chariot,
Straight to the temple, and in public wed you.
Tho' you refuse to join in ceremony,
Instead of sacred words venting loud curses,
'Twill not avail : for when the mystery's done,
I'll bear you back, and as my Queen enjoy you.

Sem. I will be dragg'd ; die stifled with my
grief—

Mitb. You have the will, but not the power to
die.

Sem. None—is there none—no pitying God
awake ?

And are your priests confederate in my ruin ?
They sure will tell you of your tyranny,
And fear too much the anger of the heav'ns,
'To force a helpless virgin : they will speak
Your crimes abroad ;—will you not, holy men ?

Mith. Let me but hear the holiest of 'em cross
me,

By heav'n he shall go sacrifice beneath:
Therefore away, priest, forward to the temple.

Sem. Help, help, you Gods!

Mith. All thought of help is vain.

Give me your beauteous hand, and willingly,
Or here are arms to bear you.

Sem. Let 'em be ;—

Call all your armies hither to your aid,
I will not stir, nor give this trembling hand
To gain an empire: thus, to th' earth, I'll grow
One piece. O, root me here, some pitying God,
And let me lose my being, to escape him!

Mith. Andravar, raise her gently from the
ground:

Take help, and bring her softly to my chariot,
[*They take her in their arms.*]

Sem. Stay, Mithridates; hear me but one
word;

One moment stay: ev'n malefactors are
Allowed to speak before their execution;
And shall not I? I, who am innocent?
'Tis not to thee, but to the Gods, I bow:
Behold—but see, from you, from you, they take
me:

O save me thus by cruel men betray'd,
Revenge yourselves, and right a ravish'd maid!

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MITHRIDATES, *encompass'd with the ghosts of his sons, who set daggers to his breast, and vanish.*

WHAT ho! Pelopidas! why, Andravar!
Haste to help!

Enter PELOPIDAS and ANDRAVAR.

Pelop. What wou'd your Majesty?

Mith. I wou'd, what I must ne'er expect on earth,

The peace I had! Come nearer.—Oh, my friends!
If fate did e'er foreshow a doom in sleep,
Mine is at hand. Last night, you well remember,
I bore Semandra from the thund'ring Gods,
Who shook the deep foundations of the temple,
With the reports of wrath divine; yet I,
This desperate wretch, through streets of fire,
did bear her

Back, in a swoon, to my most inward closet:
But there you left me—left me to the rage
Of monstrous love, which, in the midst of
faintings,

With transports yet unheard-of, forc'd a joy,
Whose momentary pleasures will heap on me
Wholeworlds of Furies, Hells of endless horror!

Pelop. But, Sir, the dream; that may divert
your cares——

Mith. Divert 'em! rather let me gather all
my courage

To bulwark in my soul. O plant me round
With your kind bodies ; blunt, if possible,
Heav'n's whetted vengeance ; while I tell the
vision.

After the dreadful ecstasy was over,
The ravish'd maid, half-dead with shrieking
pray'rs,

Burst, at the last, from my relenting arms ;
Ran to my sword ; of which when I disarm'd her,
She fled the room, with cries like one distracted.
Prest with remorse, I rested on my couch,
And slept ; but oh, a dream so full of terror,
The pale, the trembling, midnight ravisher
Ne'er saw, when cold Lucretia's mourning
shadow

His curtains drew, and lash'd him in the eyes
With her bright tresses, dabbled in her blood !

Pelop. I have heard of dreams that have prov'd
ominous ;

But I cou'd never fix my faith on fancies.

Mitb. Methought, by heav'nly order I was
doom'd

To seek my fate alive in th' other world :
Straight, like a feather, I was borne by winds,
'To a steep promontory's top, from whence
I saw the very mouth of op'ning hell.
Shooting so fast through the void caves of night,
I had not time to ponder of my passage :
I shot the lake of oaths, where fleeting ghosts,
Whose bodies were unbury'd, begg'd for
waftage.

'Then was I thrown down the infernal courts'
Infinite fathom, till I soar'd again
To the bright heav'nly plains, the happy fields.

Andr. I wonder that the brittle thread of
thought

Shou'd hold in such a maze !

Mith. Oh, now it comes.

After that heav'nly sounds had charm'd my ears,
Methought I saw the spirits of my sons,
Slain by my jealousy of their ambition ;
Who shriek'd, " he's come ! our cruel father's
come ! "

" Arm, arm," they cry'd, " through all th' ena-
mell'd grove ! "

Straight had their cries alarm'd the wounded
Of all those Romans massacred in Asia : [host
I heard the empty clank of their thin arms ;
And tender voices cry'd, " lead, Pompey, lead ! "
Straight they came on, with chariots, horse, and
When I had leisure to discern their chief, [foot.
Methought that Pompey was my son Ziphares,
Who cast his dreadful pile, and pierc'd my
heart :

Then such a din of death, swords, spears, and
javelins,

Clatter'd about me, that I wak'd with terror,
And found myself extended on the floor.

Enter PHARNACES.

Pbar. Arm, arm, great Mithridates ! the big
war

Comes with vast leaps, bounding o'er all the east
Which crouches to the torrent! Pompey comes—
Pompey the great, saluted emperor,
And, for some years, destin'd to govern all
Th' Italian armies, with such full commission
As yet was never granted to a Roman;—
Pompey, so young, so soft in shining courts,
That all the Roman ladies languish for him;—
Pompey, so fierce in camps, so brave in fields,
The very boys, like cupids, drest in arms,
Clap their young harness'd thighs, and strut to
battle;—

Pompey, Rome's darling, and Fame's eldest son,
Proclaims with Mithridates mortal war.

Mith. Were all well here, what force, what
Roman arms,
What General, marching at the head of millions,
Cou'd daunt the bold, the forward Mithridates?
But here, Pharnaces, in my guilty bosom,
The fatal foe does undermine my quiet;
Black legions are my thoughts; not Pompey, but
Ziphares comes, with all his wrongs, in arms,
Like the lieutenant of the Gods, against me:
Semandra too, like bleeding Victory,
Stands on his side, and cries out, "kill, kill, kill,
"That cursed parricide, that ravisher!"
Oh, heav'n, sustain me! or I shall go mad.
My ugly guilt lies in my conscious face,
And I am vanquish'd, slain with bosom-war.

Pbar. 'Tis much beneath your majesty, to
Yourself with fears. [alarm

Mitb. Pharnaces, thou'rt ignorant!

I tell thee, boy, remorse and upstart fear
Oppress me, in spite of all my knowledge:
Though none of those that boast philosophy
Have made a deeper search in Nature's womb
Than I—(the midnight moon has seen my
watchings)—

I tell thee, none can name her infinite seeds
Like me; nor better knows her sparks of light,
Those gems that shine in the blue-ring of heav'n;
None knows more reasons for, or against, yon'
Bright cause, can talk of accidents, [first
Above me: yet I tell thee, once again,
There is a thorn, called Conscience, makes
its way

Through all the fence of pleasure, fortified
With reasons, that this ill seem'd good to me,
And stings thy guilty father to the soul.

Pelop. After the fierceness of uncommon
pleasure,
A sudden heaviness is natural.

Andr. Not but the fading spirits will revive.—

Mitb. Never, oh never! nor did I enjoy
Expected pleasure, tho' these hands did hold,
All night, her panting beauties to my breast.
But, oh! what joy, what pleasure, what content,
Cou'd my griev'd-heart receive in ravish'd
kindness?

Her lips, which if Ziphares had been there,
Wou'd sure have shot their gleamy warmth at
distance

Were cold to me, as odours are in frost:
Her face, like weeping marble, damp'd my
flames;

And, as I drew her trembling to my arms,
She fainted still, and woo'd me with such wailings,
Such languishings, and broken sighs, to leave
her,

That, had not more than monstrous appetite
Transported me, the rose had been unblasted.

Pbar. You think of her too much: the sex of
women,

The ravish'd beauties of the earth together,
Deserve not half the grief that clouds your brow.

Pelop. Your subjects want you, to defend their
lives;

Each citizen, in armour clad, defends
His household-gods, standing to guard his door,
And cries,—“a leader! let us to the wars.”

Mith. The thunderbolt of Mithridates' battle,
That tore the Roman banners, now is lost;
My arm, my arm, ev'n my right arm, is lost.
Nor will my trumpets sound, without Ziphares:
His breath was as the air, to all the army;
His face was as the sun, in depth of winter;
And made bold cowards blush away their fears;
But he is set, for ever set, in sorrow.

Andr. Your majesty is, of yourself, sufficient
To head your eager troops! or brave Pharnaces
Stands forth, to fill Ziphares' empty place.

Pelop. Ziphares still your royal favour had,
To improve himself in arms against the Romans,

While, in inglorious fields, Pharnaces strove
Amongst barbarians, to get a name:
And tho' perhaps, he greater pains employ'd,
In rooting up such rubbish of the earth,
Than th' other did, in felling the tall trees,
Yet this was paid with labour, that with praise.

Mith. Peace, villains! peace, conspiring
sycophants!

Now, by the gods, my eyes are half unseal'd;
But, if the thought that kindles in my breast
Finds proper fuel to increase my fire,
It shall consume you, traitors! if I find
(Which I begin to do) that you have play'd
The villain, Andravar, or thou Pelopidas,
And laid Semandra's beauty as a snare
To catch Ziphares' life, (oh, all the gods!)
And ruin me, by placing of the bait;—
Mark me, if ought of this, if any shadow
Appear that you conspir'd to betray me;—
I'll heap such horrors on your frightened souls,
That you shall call your brother-devils up,
To snatch you hence, rather than stand my fury!

Pelop. Why shou'd your majesty suspect your
servants? [passion.

Mith. Because thou did'st foment my fatal
And, when I view thee well, my Genius bids
Beware of thee: tho' thy most subtle devil
Has wrought me still to listen to thy lies,
Thou art, methinks, maliciously contriv'd;
And hast, if ever yet a villain had,
The face of a most subtle-working slave.

Andr. We have done nought, but what your royal word
Did warrant.—If you lov'd, shou'd we rebuke it?
Or durst we think to quench a fire, which you
Resolv'd shou'd burn?

Mith. Yes, traitors, yes! you ought,
When you had seen me going, to have stopt
me:

My struggling virtue might, with some assist-
ance,
Have cast the venom of my passion up;
But, with your poisonous breath, you made it
rage,
Till I was fit to ruin poor Semandra.

Enter SEMANDRA.

But, oh! behold the innocence I wrong'd!

Sem. What, dost thou start? Oh Heav'ns!
Semandra frights him!

Why, what a monster then must I appear,
Whose form can shake the bloody Mithridates!
'Tis sure, thou hast undone this helpless crea-
ture, [Weeping.

And turn'd to mortal paleness all her beauties;
Thou hast made her hate the day which once
adorn'd

Her op'ning sweets:—how wretched hast thou
made me!

Yet, Oh my soul, thou inward knowledge, speak,
How much I hate this violated shrine!

Mith. Wretched Semandra!

Sem. Dost thou pity me ?

Is the long line of my eternal grief
Of such a charming force, that it can fetch
Tears from that rock ? Ah, most unheard-of
sorrow !

Dost thou repent ? or are they but feign'd tears ?
Whate'er they are, thou should'st have thought,
before,

The cruel consequence of this dark deed.
When I was heav'd in air, and with my cries
Pierc'd the deaf Heav'ns, and call'd to thee for
mercy,

Then had'st thou thus dissolv'd, I shou'd have
blest thee ;

But now, thy black repentance comes too late.
What, ah ! what satisfaction can'st thou make !

Mitb. Instruct me.

Sem. No : there is in nature none,
Since I can never be Ziphares' bride :
For if thou shou'dst consent to make us one,
And Heav'n shou'd warrant it ; nay, though
Ziphares

Extravagantly shou'd consent to take me,
Ah, cou'd I meet those dear, those faithful arms,
Which yet, in sleep, ne'er touch'd a breast but
mine,

Thus wrong'd, and thus defil'd, thus nothing
left

Of his Semandra, but her spotless mind ?
This is too much to think ! Ah, cruel King !
Now I cou'd curse, now I cou'd tear myself,

Now I cou'd weep, as if 'twere possible
To wash my stains out! Tell me, O you Pow'rs,
(For I'll be calm) was I not worth your care?
And why, you Gods, was Virtue made to suffer?
Unless this world be but as fire, to purge
Her dross, that she may mount, and be a star.
Were this but certain—Ah, there's nothing sure,
But my irrevocable fate!—undone Semandra!
This, this is certain, death with loss of honour.

[Exit.

Mith. Farewel, Semandra! thou most wrong'd
of women!

But I'll this instant go to Monima;
And if I find what I suspect, Pharnaces,
I'll cut thee off, as an infectious limb:
And, for those villains, I shall quickly know
The wrong she has had; whose accus'd innocence

If your foul words have sully'd with black slander,
Think not to 'scape: for shou'd you ride on
charms,

Take winds to bear you, or the lightning's speed,
With panting horror to the brink of hell,
I'd sweep you from the verge to flames beneath
And sink your villanies with weighty death!

[Exit.

Pbar. First, sink yourself, your crown, and
love, together!

Pelopidas, this comes of your cool counsel:
Had I been heard, Monima had been gone
By this; enjoy'd, and crown'd my royal bride,

And we receiv'd, as conqu'rors, by the Romans.
Hast thou not heard how, when Tigranes came,
And cast his diadem at Pompey's feet,
He call'd him King, and rais'd him by that name
To sit as equal to the Roman Consul?
By all the Gods, I will not stay a moment,
But take immediately my flight; except
You swear to side with Rome, call Pompey hither,
And haste with all the forces we can make,
To join his army, and betray my father.

Pelop. A sudden thought of lucky mischief
comes:

Old Archelaus is arriv'd; but left
The labour'd army some few furlongs hence.
You know the violent love the soldiers bear
The Prince your brother; and we know too well,
And so do all the murmuring citizens,
How cruelly your father lately us'd him;
But that great mole, the multitude, ne'er sees
Who works their Prince, but still take on all
trust;

Therefore I instantly will spread amongst 'em,
How Archelaus was conspirator
Against the Prince, and finding more advantage
To have the King his son-in-law, by letters
Basely compell'd his daughter to the marriage.

Pbar. Millions to one, but this will set 'em on
To tear curst Archelaus, like mad dogs.
Besides, I find, by frequent murmurs, how
His subjects are quite tir'd with length of war;
And, but last night, I know no less than twelve,

All captains, who conspir'd to take the part
Of Pompey, and intreated me to head 'em.

Andr. Pursue the treason, and be sure it cool
not!

While I, with Tryphon, hasten to the army:—
A priest will colour well our enterprise.
There will we give out all that treachery
Can raise to fire 'em;—how the King has doom'd
The Prince to death, having first ravish'd from
him

The fair Semandra, for whose sake he dies.

Phar. While I immediately to Pompey send,
Who comes, I hear, on hasty march, to fight
Our army, and besiege us in our walls.

Pelop. Thus shall the Prince and I rule all
within;

And you, with the high-priest my brother, play
Your parts without.

Phar. I long to be in action;
And sure Rome must, for the great overthrow,
Give me my father's crowns; which gratitude
Shall distribute to both your utmost wishes.

Pelop. We must not doubt your bounty.—
But, away:—

Enter ZIPHARES, with ISMENES, at a distance.

Your melancholy brother may o'er hear us.

[*Exit Phar. Pelop. Andr.*

Ziph. Oh, my hard fate! why, did I trust her
ever?

What story is not full of woman's falsehood?

The sex is all a sea of wide destruction;
We are the vent'rous barks that leave our home,
For those sure dangers which their smiles conceal.

At first, they draw us in with flatt'ring looks
Of summer-calms, and a soft gale of sighs;
Sometimes, like Syrens, charm us with their songs,

Dance on the waves, and show their golden locks;
But, when the tempest comes, then, then they leave us,

Or rather, help the new calamity,
And the whole storm is one injurious woman!
The lightning, follow'd with a thunder-bolt,
Is marble-hearted woman: all the shelves,
The faithless winds, blind rocks, and sinking sands,

Are women all; the racks of wretched men.
Pr'ythee, Ismenes, while I lay me here,
Charm me with some sad song into a slumber.

S O N G.

BY SIR CAR SCROOP.

I.

ONE night, when all the village slept,
Myrtillo's sad despair
The wand'ring shepherd waking kept,
To tell the woods his care.

II.

'Be gone,' said he, 'fond thought, be gone;
'Eyes, give your sorrows o'er:
'Why shou'd you waste your tears for one
'That thinks on you no more?

III.

‘ Yet all the birds, the flocks, and pow’rs,
 ‘ That dwell within this grove,
 ‘ Can tell how many tender hours
 ‘ We here have pass’d in love.

IV.

‘ Yon stars above (my cruel foes!)
 ‘ Have heard how she has sworn
 ‘ A thousand times, that, like to those,
 ‘ Her flame shou’d ever burn.

V.

‘ But, since she’s lost, Oh! let me have
 ‘ My wish, and quickly die:
 ‘ In this cold bank I’ll make a grave,
 ‘ And there for ever lie.

VI.

‘ Sad nightingales the watch shall keep,
 ‘ And kindly here complain.—
 ‘ Then down the shepherd lay to sleep,
 ‘ But never wak’d again.’

Enter ARCHELAUS.

Arch. How now, Ismenes? Pr’ythee, gentle boy,
 Instruct me where to find thy royal master.
 What, dost thou weep? I charge thee bring me
 to him.

Isme. See there, my Lord!

Arch. Bless me, you heav’nly Pow’rs!—
 Upon the earth! It cannot be thy master.
 Is that a posture for a conqueror?—
 He who so bravely beat the Romans back?—
 A general, and triumph’er? Haste, and show me.

Isme. By heav'n, 'tis true, my Lord:—there lies the Prince!

Arch. Something my heart presag'd, when, having left

The army, I came posting to the court,
And scarce receiv'd a welcome from my friends.
They said the Prince had triumph'd, but I saw
Not the least track of such a glory left,
No glimmering twilight of so full an honour.—
There has been foul play, and I'll find it out.

Zipb. Away, Semandra!—cruel woman, leave me!

Arch. Ha! goes it there? Ziphares, Prince, arise!

Zipb. Ha! who is there? old Archelaus?

Arch. Why

Do I not see you in a chariot,
With all the pride of Asia's brightest gems?
Why mount you not the throne which you deserve,

The Lords of Colchis waiting as your slaves?
Give me some reason why I see you thus.

Zipb. Alas! he had no hand in her revolt,
Nor knows not yet, perhaps, how she has us'd me!
Why do I seem thus strange then?—Oh, Archelaus,

(For I must never call thee father more)

Pardon my faulty carriage!

Arch. Forbear these strict embraces,
Your tears, your hanging on my bosom thus:—
Your sighs reduce my age to sobbing childhood,

And make an infant of your poor old man !

Zipb. Did I not say I never more must call
Thee father ?

Arch. Yes, you did.

Zipb. Fond, foolish sorrow !

Thou art, thou shalt, thou must be still my fa-
ther,

My brother, sister, mistress, all—my Friend !—

For all but thou have left me ! no kind eye

Pities the suff'rings of abus'd Ziphares !—

They fly, all fly from my infectious fortune !

Arch. Nay, good, dear Prince, stand up ! you
smother all

Your words with groans : dry up this womanish
grief,

And speak, dear Sir, declare the cursed cause,

The baleful spring, the source of all this mis-
chief.

Zipb. Wou'd you believe it ? Scarce can I
myself :—

Oh heav'ns, and oh you ever-burning lights,

Who have beheld at midnight from your orbs

Our flames, that kindled bright and chaste as
yours,

Which of you all, which most malignant star,—

Show me that envious fire that crost our loves,

That I may curse him from his fatal sphere !

Arch. Name it, I say, the ground of all this
trouble :—

I feel a warm revenge run through my blood,

As if I had put off some forty years :—

Methinks I stand as fit to fight the cause
Of friendship now, as then I cou'd my love's:—
But speak.

Zipb. Thy daughter—

Arcb. Well, I guess'd Fate wounded there.

Zipb. Semandra, my most fair, dear, gentle
mistress—

Arcb. If she be false, she is no longer fair.

Zipb. That sweet protesting creature, that
pure whiteness,
Where I so deep had writ my vows in blood,
Is taken from me!

Arcb. By her own consent?

Zipb. Most certain. That eternal bond of
oaths,
Committed to her keeping, now is cancell'd:
Ev'n her fair hand, the seal of all my love,
Her hand has giv'n her faithless heart away!

Arcb. Then, she is false? you know her to
be so?

Zipb. False, false as waters, winds, or wan-
d'ring fires:—
She is more false than woman can believe!

Arcb. The opening o. her treachery, come,
how wast?

Particular revenge wou'd know particulars:—
At first, I guess'd she did receive you kindly.

Zipb. Quite contrary;—as if she ne'er had
seen me:—

Quite alter'd, quite estrang'd, reserv'd and cold,
With all the coyness of a base-born beauty,

Made proud with pow'r:—not one tender look:—
The very accent of her voice was chang'd,
Nor was she to be known, but by her beauty:—
Nought else cou'd speak her to my sense the
same,

O nothing but the face of my Semandra!

Arch. When my keen sword shall glitter in
her eyes,

Doubt not, but I shall make her know you well;
And, tho' you never grace her with your favour,
(For she is now unworthy your embraces)
Yet I will bring the trait'ress to your knees.

Zipb. Can it be

Thou shou'dst be ignorant, she's past the giving?

Arch. I have not met the news, which your
swol'n eyes

Appear so big with.

Zipb. Here I am lost again:—

Here all my courage, which has born the blow
Of sternest war, shrinks like a beaten coward:—
Here, I confess, my piety gives way:—
I cou'd fall out with the forgetful Gods,
And curse the cruel author of my being.
No, tyrant! no, thou bloody parent! think not
That I will bear it longer!—I'll forget,
Like thee, all nature, all remorse, all pity,
And snatch her from thee, wedded as you are!

Arch. What, wedded? married?

Zipb. Wedded, married—bedded!

He has enjoy'd her, rifled that fair casket
Where all the riches of my life were laid:—

Yes, yes, you Gods! I saw 'em pass along,
Pass to the temple, through the crowded streets;
Saw 'em come back; darted my wishing eyes
At her false face, with such accusing glances,
She fainted in the chariot:—yes, I saw her
Sink pale, and dying down; but there I lost her,
And left her to the revels of the night,
To be enjoy'd, ev'n this last night enjoy'd!

Arct. By all the honours which she has dishonour'd,
She shall not live another.

Zipb. Oh, my father!
Could you but guess the pains that I endure—
Oh! all the subtlest fits of sharpest sickness
Were nothing to the torments which I bore:—
I tim'd ev'n their disrobing kisses, smiles,
The first embraces, and the racking joy;—
But there methought fancy itself was stopt,—
It could no more.—The limit of my life
Was found, the end of all my joys on earth.

Arct. She dies! not destiny shall save her
from me!

As she has sworn, and as she has forsworn,
I'll draw my sword, bath'd in her dearest blood,
From forth her heart-strings, while the rank
red weeds

Cling to my reeking blade!—or would you more,
I am grown up to your anger.

Zipb. General, hold!

I have been impious in my vented rage;
For which, oh, pardon me, my royal father,

And you, most injur'd Pow'rs, whom I offended!
And, oh, whatever shall become of me,
Forgive the fair, the false, the lov'd Semandra!
If, while I live, thou mark'st her gentle limbs
With the least wound, it ends Ziphares' life;
Or if thou hurt'st her after I am dead,
Thou'lt raise my ashes up in arms against thee.

Isme. My lord, the Queen Semandra's coming
hither.

Zipb. Say'st thou?

Isme. The Queen——But see, she enters!

Zipb. Ha!

Enter SEMANDRA.

Sem. Oh, Ziphares! Oh, Prince! Oh, thou
most wrong'd!

Zipb. How can this be? Madam, you ought
at least

To have sent me word: for now, instead of
songs,

I can present you nothing but my tears,
A beating heart, and groans that will not suit
With your most happy state, your blest con-
dition.

Sem. Ah, did you rightly understand my
sufferings,
You wou'd not wound a bleeding, dying,
creature:—

But I'll endure yet more. When I am dead,
And 'tis too late, you'll murmur to yourself,

“ At least I might have heard what the poor
wretch
Cou’d say.”

Arch. O Syren!—but I will be hush’d.

[*Aside.*

Zipb. What can’st thou say, if I resolve to
hear thee?

Thou wilt but tear the wounds which thou hast
made.

This visit was most cruel:—why coms’t thou
then?—

For fear I shou’d forget thee?—Merciless woman!

Arch. Yet let us hear her, Prince! let’s hear
the sorceress;

That when sure vengeance overtakes her crimes,
She may have nought to answer.

Sem. The good Gods

Reward that voice of mercy!—First then, my
lord——

Zipb. No; I’ll be gone:—Fly, Archelaus, fly!
She has a tongue that can undo the world.
She eyes me, just as when she first inflam’d me:
Such were her looks, so melting was her language,
Such false soft sighs, and such deluding tears,
When from her lips I took the luscious poison—
When with that pleasing perjur’d breath avowing,
Her whispers trembled through these credulous
ears,

And told the story of my utter ruin.

Arch. Nay, ’tis impossible to clear herself,
And it was impudence to offer at it:

Therefore, thou shameless offspring of my blood,

I'll cut thee from me:—thus, with all thy crimes,
Die, as thou did'st desire!

[*Half-drawing : stopped by Ziphares.*

Zipb. Hold thy hand!—

I charge thee touch her not!

Arch. By Heav'n, she dies!

I may dispose my own;—she shall not live.

Zipb. By all the Gods, she shall, while I have
breath!

And, if thou draw'st, I'll guard her life with
mine.

I shou'd be loth to lift my arm 'gainst thee,
Of all mankind; but, were my father here
Resolv'd to give her death, I wou'd oppose him.

Sem. Draw then, and sheath your weapons in
my breast,

In curs'd Semandra's heart; but for the world,
Oh, father, do not wound the Prince Ziphares:
And, oh Ziphares, do not hurt my father!
Upon my knees, I beg you to be calm,
And hear me thus.

Zipb. Oh rise! false, as thou art,
Thou once wert empress of my soul, and I
Still drag thy chains: speak then, Semandra,
speak!

For I'm so dozd, so weary with complaining,
That I could stand and listen to the winds,
And think that women talk'd—observe the rain,
And think that women wept—or in the clouds

Behold Semandra's form, still fleeting from me.
But, speak :—I lose my senses with my woes.

Arch. He has sav'd thy life:—come, make a
handsome lie

In recompence.

Sem. I will be short, as true.—

When you were gone to th' wars, the King re-
laps'd ;—

How prompted, Heav'n best knows—and when
with conquest

You came from battle, he with dreadful threats
Compell'd me to receive you in that manner.

Zipb. Ah, cruel creature! what, what menaces,
What fear of death, cou'd so have made Zi-
phares

Receive Semandra?

Sem. Not racks, nor all the tortures
Which hell combin'd cou'd put into the hearts
Of bloodiest tyrants, shou'd have forc'd me to't !
But, oh! your life, which he with deepest oaths
Had sworn to take, unless I seem'd to scorn
you,—

That dash'd my spirits, baffled all the daring
Of my defenceless heart :—there, I confess,
The woman work'd : I trembled and agreed
To see you so, rather than lose you ever.

Arch. Now, by my arms, she has come off
with wonder.

Sem. And think, my lord, reflect upon yourself :
I dare believe so dearly once you lov'd me,
That were you certain I shou'd lose my life,

Unless you us'd me in that very manner,
I know you wou'd constrain your flame awhile,
And seem as cold, and as reserv'd, as I.

Zipb. Oh, heart ! Oh, bleeding love !—but speak,
Semandra !

For there is wond'rous reason, mighty sense,
In what you say, and I could hear you ever.

Sem. When you were gone, the cruel King
came in,

And, without stop, propos'd the fatal marriage;
Which being denied, he forc'd me to the temple.
Yet, at the altar, I denied my hand,
Invok'd the Gods with the most violent sorrow,
Tears, sighs, and swoonings; curs'd the frighted
priests ;

Struck down the censors ; and, like one dis-
tracted,

I mangled my own flesh ; but all in vain :
I was suppos'd his Queen, and so enjoy'd.

Zipb. Then still thy heart, thy heart was mine,
Semandra ?

Sem. It was, it is, for ever shall be yours !

Zipb. Oh, at thy feet let me for ever lie,
Thus hang upon thy knees with dying grasps,
Thou most wrong'd innocence, abus'd Se-
mandra !

Sem. Oh, my dear lord, you shall not kneel
without me.

Zipb. Thou art not false then !

Sem. Cou'd you think me so ?

False to my life, my soul, my all I have !

Zipb. I did ; I thought thee false, and I deserve
To die, for wronging thy most matchless faith :
For thou art true, constant as pining turtles,
Constant, as courage to the brave in battle,
Constant, as martyrs burning for their Gods.

Arch. What changes drive the bus'ness of
the world !

Come, no more weeping :—rise !

Think on the King, if he shou'd take you thus.

Zipb. Oh rise, Semandra ! what, what are we
doing ?

Why, Archelaus, why did'st thou cut me off
The moment's pleasure which my thoughts were
forming ?

Thy cruel breath quite broke the brittle glass
Of my short life, and stopt the running sand.

What shall we do, Semandra ?

Sem. Part, and die !

Zipb. Die, 'tis resolv'd ; but how ? that, that
must be

My future care ; and with that thought I leave
thee.

Go then, thou setting-star ! take from these
eyes

(These eyes, that if they see thee, will be
wishing),

O take those languishing pale fires away,

And leave me to the wide, dark den of Death !

Sem. Something within me sobs to my bod-
ing heart,

“ Semandra ne'er shall see Ziphares more.”

Zipb. Away, then! part, for ever part, Semandra!

Let me alone sustain those rav'nous Fates,
Which, like two famish'd tygers, are gone out,
And have usin the wind. Death, come upon me!
Night, and the bloodiest deed of darkness, end me!
But, Oh! for thee, for thee, if thou must die,
I beg of Heav'n this last, this only favour,
To give thy life a painless dissolution.
Oh, may those ravish'd beauties fall to earth,
Gently as wither'd roses leave their stalks!
May death be mild to thee, as love was cruel;
Calm, as the spirits in a trance decay;
And soft as those who sleep their souls away!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

PELOPIDAS, ANDRAVAR, *Priest, encompassed with Romans.*

Pelopidas.

ROMANS, who send your laws far as the sun
His beams, and whom the universe beholds
With joy, yet dreads your anger as the Gods!
Why move you to the ruin of this tyrant,
To the sure death of bloody Mithridates,
As if you fear'd, or car'd not, he shou'd die?
Can you suspect an ambush? or that we
Shou'd dare betray you, yielding thus our
persons,

Our lives, our Prince himself, into your hands?

Andr. This man, to whom the servile priests
bow down,

Who wears a crown in honour of his place,

And sacred worth, abandons all his glories

T' attest the truth of what we have declar'd.

Enter PHARNACES.

But see, the fierce, the brave, the great Pharnaces

Comes on to meet you; waves his royalties—

Therefore, O mighty Romans, give him audience.

Phar. That I am rough, and of an untaught
spirit,

All the East knows: I ever scorn'd those slaves

With whom I have been bred; and when my
father

Order'd Barbarian Princes for my masters,

In arts and arms, I spurn'd 'em from my presence;

And rather chose, since Rome might not instruct
me,

Nature in all my actions for my guide.

Hence cou'd I brook more hardly the fierce mind

Of our inhuman parent, Mithridates.

My eldest brother's fate did kindle first

My fiery soul to a most swift revenge:

For when the state of Bosphorus demanded

That Prince for King, he bound the gallant youth

In golden chains, and doom'd him to be slain.

Two more were by his boundless fury strangled;

And ev'n the last but me, the brave Ziphæus.

Last night was murder'd in the tyrant's palace;
In whose sad cause, the squadrons which he led
Of late so valiantly against you Romans,
Attend some furlongs hence to join your banners.
If this be true, not to recount the slaughters
Of all his queens and poison'd concubines,
I think the world (Rome I shou'd first have nam'd)
Will little censure this so just revolt.
If you suspect me false, behold Pharnaces,—
Ne'er yet detain'd, but free as roving lions
That sweep at will, like winds in deserts wild,—
Behold him, with these noble hostages,
Your pris'ner to be bound the slave of Rome!

Rom. Capt. Lead us on to victory.

Omnes. To victory!

Pbar. On then, you race of Heav'n, you seed
of Gods!

And to immortalize Pharnaces' name,
Plant me, like thunder breaking from this cloud,
Foremost, while all the rattling engines follow.
Monima, whom this tyrant ravish'd from me,
I hear, is fled to Pompey: her I ask
For my reward, with half his spreading empire.
But I waste words—let's act, and then make claim.
And O remember, when we storm the town,
Remember that most horrid massacre
Of Asia:—whet on that your blunted spirits,
Till with the motion lightning edge your souls
To mow off hoary heads—hurl infants puling
From the lugg'd breast—kill in the very womb:
To beauty's cries be deaf:—make all Synope

But one vast grave, to hold the infinite bodies
Which we must shovel in; and when you see
The head of Mithridates in this hand,
Then think, whoever dar'd for Rome like me,
Or bought an empire at a price so dreadful;—
Then yield the beauty I so much desire,
And all those crowns to which my thoughts
aspire. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter ZIPHARES and ARCHELAUS.

Zipb. 'Tis late; the gath'ring clouds, like
meeting armies,
Come on apace, and mortals now must die,
'Till the bright ruler of the rising day
Creates 'em new.—The wakeful bird of night
Claps her dark wings to th' windows of the
dying.
General, good night.

Arch. Sir, I'll not leave you yet:
I do not like the dusky boding eve.
Well I remember, Sir, how you and I
Have often on the watch in winter walk'd,
Clad in cold armour, round the sleeping camp,
'Till, cover'd o'er from head to foot in snow,
The centinels have started at our march,
And thought us ghosts stalking in winding
sheets:
And do you think I cannot watch you now,

Thus cover'd, and beneath this bounteous roof?
Sleep, Sir! I'll guard you from suspected danger.

Zipb. Danger! there's none—no shadow of a
harm.—

Dear general! you'll oblige me to retire:
We'll meet to-morrow with the earliest dawn;
I'm troubled now, and heavy: in the morning
Soon as you please, you shall have entrance here;
And then, I trust the bounteous Gods, you'll find
A wond'rous alteration. Sleep may charm
My talking griefs, and hush 'em fast for ever.

Arch. 'Tis that I fear.—I tell you there are
deaths

Brooding this night abroad. A recluse priest,
Surpris'd with mortal sickness, was, this evening,
As he himself desir'd, ta'en from his bed,
And carry'd to the closet of the King,
Where, after some close conference, he expir'd.
Immediately your father orders gave
For doubling all his guards, and went in fury
To Monima's apartment, where 'twas said
Pharnaces had been gone awhile before.

Zipb. I ever thought that brother most ambitious;

But what is this to me?

Arch. What follow'd does
Concern both you, and me, and all the east:
For straight, when the sick priest had breath'd
his last,

The sacred oil, which for a hundred years
Supplied the sun behind the golden veil,

Went out, and all the mystic lights were
quench'd:

Strange doleful voices shrilly echo'd through
The dark'ned fane: the monuments did open,
And all the marble tombs, like sponges squeez'd,
Spouted big sweat: the curtain was consum'd
With wond'rous flame; and every shining altar
Dissolv'd to yellow puddle, which anon
A flash of thirsty lightning quite lick'd up:
While through the streets your murder'd bro-

thers rode,
Arcathias, Mithridates, and Machares,
And madd'd all the screaming multitude.

Is not this strange?

Zipb. The Gods reproach my slackness [*Aside.*
'Tis strange! most wond'rous strange! Once
more, I pray thee,

By all our friendship, leave me to myself.

Arcb. Ah, Prince, you cannot hide
Your purpose from your narrow searching
friend:

I find it, by the sinking of your spirits,
Your hollow speech, deep musings, eager looks,
Whose fatal longings quite devour their objects,
You have decreed, by all the Gods you have!
This night to end your noble life.

Zipb. Away!
I never thought thee troublesome till now.

Arcb. I care not: spite of all that you can do,
I'll stay, and weep you into gentleness:

Your faithful soldier, this old doating fool,
Shall be more troublesome than one that's wiser.
By Heav'n ! you shall not hurt your precious
life.

I'll stay and wait you—wake here till I die—
Follow you, as a fond and fearful father
Wou'd watch a desperate child.

Zipb. I'll tell thee then,
Since thou wilt tear the secret from my breast,
And dive into the bottom of my soul,
This night must end me !—make not a reply :—
'Tis fix'd as fast and sure as are my woes.
Did'st thou but know what 'tis to love like me,
And to be so belov'd—O Archelaus !
Yet to be past all hope of happiness,
Of ever tasting those desired beauties,
Of any dawn, least glimpse, or spark of comfort,—
Did'st thou not hate me much, even thou
would'st kill me !

Arch. If that my death (for that indeed's but
little)

Cannot once move you from this dreadful deed,—
Yet, Prince, your country, which must fall with-
out you,
Your bleeding country must obtain at least
That you would live to free her from her foes :—
Your glory calls, your sinking father begs,
That you wou'd save your country from the
Romans.

Zipb. Much I indeed have got by conquering
Rome !

And to much purpose lost my dearest blood !
Much have my wounds deserv'd ! and Heav'n
can tell

How nobly I have been rewarded for 'em !—
I tell thee, Archelaus, I have sworn,
Were I to live, I wou'd not fight again :
The world shou'd neither better be, nor worse,
For me.—But I waste time ; and to convince thee,
Since thou wilt have the trouble to behold
My death, I bid thee now farewell for ever.

Arch. Hold, Sir !

Zipb. I will ; and talk as calmly to thee
As any dying Roman of 'em all.

I have consider'd well of what I do,
And I will perish with as little noise
As fate cou'd wish that wou'd not be accus'd.

Arch. I'll follow you.

Zipb. I wou'd intreat thee not :—
Thou hast no sorrows that are past the sufferance ;
And sure my flying soul will hang her wing,
When she shall feel thy weighty death upon her.
O Archelaus, leave me to my fate !
If thou must see me fall, I charge thee live,
At least so long to tell Semandra of me :
Bear her some token of my ill-starr'd love,
Which empire cou'd not win to live without her,
Dip in the blood which trickles from my heart
Thy handkerchief, and bid her keep it for me,
As a remembrance, now and then, to mourn
me :—

Swear to do this !

Arch. This I will do! and, mark me, cruel Prince,
If thus thou violat'st that royal frame,
Tearing the gallant spirit from his mansion,
I swear by what I tremble at, thy death,
I'll double all thy wounds upon Semandra!

Zipb. Ha!

Arch. I'll tear her piece-meal, and so hack her limbs,
Thou shalt not know her in the other world.

Zipb. Oh torture! dear, good Archelaus, hold!
I know thou can'st not mean such cruelty.
Why dost thou rack me thus, with thoughts in death

That are much heavier ev'n than death itself?
Why dost thou make my eyes thus swim in tears?
I charge thee, do not hurt her!—for the sake
Of all the Gods, be gentle to my love!—

I beg for mercy to the soft Semandra!
Alas! if she deserv'd, as she is faultless,
She cou'd not bear the wounds which we can bear.

Arch. Give me your promise then that you
will live,—

Live but this night,—or I have sworn her death.

Zipb. Thou hast found the means to charm me
into life,

And keep me on the rack; but no more threats
Against Semandra:—'twas unkindly done,
And I grow angry at my fate's delay.

Arch. Why wilt thou be thus forward? Live
to-night ;—

Be careful of yourself but till the morn:
Methinks there may be wonders wrought ere
then.

Zipb. O Archelaus ! 'tis impossible.

Had she been ravish'd by another man,
I cou'd have clear'd her with the villain's blood ;
But by my father touch'd, what miracle
Can work me into hope ? Heav'n here is bankrupt ;

The wond'ring Gods blush at their want of pow'r,
And, quite abash'd, confess they cannot help me.

Arch. Sure, by yon lighted torches, I discern
Your father moving this way.

Zipb. Ha ! my father !

How my flesh trembles ! I cou'd do a deed
Wou'd make us both run mad ! — Draw, Archelaus ! —

Yet stay ! — what devil starts thus in my blood,
And turns my reason to this maze of folly ? —

No ! let us suffer more, if possible : —

Yet I will shun his presence. O you Powers,
Is that a crime ? answer me if it be,

And I will meet him, though his sight should
blast me. [*Exeunt Ziphares and Archelaus.*]

Enter MITHRIDATES, Captain of the Guards, and Attendants.

Mith. Betray'd ! — and by my son ! — given up a
prey

For the insulting Romans to devour !

Pharnaces is the traitor, that Pharnaces
Who was t' inherit all that space of empire,
Which fortune gave to this unhappy King!
O friends, when from the palace-gate we sallied,
And drove the bold assailants through the city,
The impious boy charg'd, as I foremost rode,
And brav'd my fury with his beaver up!
But, Oh the Gods! I who before had crimson'd
My arms with blood of rebels,—I who mov'd
With whirlwinds' swiftness still on every side,
And tost like leaves the weightiest foes about me,
Now stood, as if Gorgonian charms had fixt me;—
Nor know I more.

Capt. Your sword, great Sir, when you
Awhile had gaz'd on that audacious Prince,
Fell from your hand; your mighty spirit left you;
And as some famous piece of antique work,
When the sunk props and wasted beams decay,
Staggers, and nods before the ruin comes,
So wav'd your royal fabric ere it fell;
And, as our arms receiv'd you, curs'd Pharnaces,
Borne by ambition to a murder new,
Offer'd a wound, and 'twas with great expence
Of lives, we bore your body to the palace.

Mith. My senses blaze! my last, I know, is
come,—
My last of hours!—'tis wond'rous horrid! now
My lawless love and boundless pow'r reproach
me!
But I will think no more on't. Come, my friends,
Let's meet these Romans, and my rebel son;

Let's kill till we are weary, then lie down,
And rest for ever. O 'tis noble ruin!
Creatures of vilest make, upon disgust,
With knives, or cords, set loose their coward
souls;

But we will live in spite to grieve the world,
While life will last, or any spirits hold.
O that, like serpents hewn, we still might move,
Our limbs lopt off, and kill with every parcel!

Enter SEMANDRA.

Sem. 'Tis done! my ruin is at last reveng'd,
And cruel Mithridates is no more!
That famous wicked man shall kill no more:
Fall'n is the murderer, he shall love no more
Another's right,—shall ravish now no more.

Mitb. O horror! snatch me, furies, from her
presence!

Gape wide, oh earth, and swallow me alive!

Sem. I go before, and never shall we meet
On earth again, inhuman Mithridates!
Yet I rejoice not, be my witness Heav'n!
At those calamities that come upon thee;
But think 'em just, and with a dread reflection
Behold thy fate, and wonder at the Gods.
Not but thy son, my love, my lost Ziphares,
And I, in lamentable shapes, made up
By death's own hand, will tell 'em all thy story.
For ever thus, thou ravisher of honour,
I leave thee to the vultures of thy conscience,

To all the stings ambition feels in death,
 Or lust, the rape committed. O, you Pow'rs,
 Make firm my hand, for an exploit, to crown
 My life, whose bus'ness shall be quickly done!

Mith. Away, to arms, to arms! plunge deep in
 blood!

Be quick to die! Were all the Roman piles,
 And Scythian darts, and Parthia's poison'd
 arrows,

Shot through this body, her words wou'd be more,
 I'll not endure 't. Rush to the fatal war!

I wou'd be drunk with death, and steaming
 slaughter,

To stupify the sense of inward torment.

Haste then, and wallow in the murd'ring field;
 Through all the avenues to battle fly;

They who have liv'd in blood, in blood must
 die!

[*Excunt.*]

Trumpets. Enter PELOPIDAS, ANDRAVAR, *their*
Swords drawn, with a lamp.

Pelop. Yonder he sallies, furious for destruc-
 tion!

And now full scope is given to act our business,
 And end the sad Ziphares.

Andr. I am glad

The chance is fall'n to us:—to death, nay more,
 To hell I hate him, and to have him slain
 By any hand but mine, wou'd pall the murder.

Pelop. The palace now is drawn
 Of all the glitt'ring host that twinkled here,

Following their King, to shoot the gulph of ruin :
And it was order'd well, by Prince Pharnaces,
While with the Romans he dispatch'd his father,
That we shou'd kill his drooping brother. Hal
I hear some tread ! your lamp must wink awhile.

Enter ZIPHARES.

Zipb. Oh, 'tis too much:—I never shall sleep
more.

How loud the voice of fate sounds every where!
Trumpets and drums ! yet old Archelaus,
With grief and watching spent, in spite of all
Those tides of care that swell'd ere while so high,
Lies like a child that brawl'd himself asleep.
Ismenes too, that wept to see me mourn,
Falls on his breast, and nods his tears away :
So sleeps the sea-boy on the cloudy mast,
Safe, as a drowsy Triton, rock'd with storms,
While tossing princes wake on beds of down.

Pelop 'Tis he:—prepare!

Andr. Both perish, if he escape.

Zipb. This darkness fills my breast with horror.—now,

Now I may do the deed ; which done, all's sure:—
It shall be so, and thus I will deceive him.
But then---he kills Semandra!---Whence this
light?

Swords! vizors! what assassins are these?
Wou'd they were more! --for ruin is my wish:—
Yet I disdain to fall by villains' hands.

[*Beats 'em off.*

Enter SEMANDRA, with a dagger in her band.

Sem. Where do I wander in the dismal shades
Of this black night?---there's not a soul beneath,
Who died as I must do, for fatal love,
Knows better all the gloomy arbours there,
Than I each chamber in this house of death.
'Twas here the god-like Prince did woo me first,
Sigh'd his first vows, and wept me into passion:---
Where shall I find him? that most perfect soul,
Whose whiteness will to after ages answer
For all the spotted loves of perjur'd men?
Meet him I must, and run into his arms;
But with a Roman blow, which first shall drive
This poniard to my heart; then, rush upon him,
Then clasp him close, then---he'll believe me
true.

Enter ZIPHARES.

Zipb. This way the cowards fly; this way the
noise goes.

I think thou hast it there, and can'st not 'scape
me. *[Stabbing Semandra.*

Sem. I thank the Gods, I shall not.---Let me
kiss

The hand that kills me.---Oh, too gracious Hea-
ven!

Semandra now is happy.

Zipb. Semandra! what!

What say'st thou? Speak again, thou dismal
voice!

Sem. Oh, that I cou'd see your face before I die,—
Those eyes, where I wou'd look my soul away.

Zipb. Awake! what ho, Ismenes! haste! a light,
Haste hither, father, Archelaus, haste!
My heart bodes ruin, we are all undone.

Enter ARCHELAUS *and* ISMENES, *with a light.*

Oh, Father, either I am charm'd, or here
Semandra lies, slain by this dreadful hand.

Arch. Our guardian-spirits shield us! 'tis my daughter.

Zipb. Curs'd fate! malicious stars! you now
have drain'd
Yourselves of all your pois'nous influence—
Ev'n the last baleful drop is shed upon me.

Sem. Give me thy hand, most matchless of thy kind!
O join us, father, join us thus in death!—
Now thou art mine;—and we'll be wedded too—
In th' other world:—our souls shall there be mixt:—

Whoknows, but there our joys may be compleat?
A happy father, thou, and I, perhaps,
The smiling mother of some little Gods?

Zipb. Oh, Archelaus! if thou lov'st her memory,
Fly to the King, and let him understand
The truth of all. If he be pleas'd to hear her,
Intreat him haste: the pangs of death are on her.

Arcb. I will, if tears will let me find the way:
And, by your leave, these weapons shall be mine.

Zipb. That I expected. Ha! she faints! Is-
menes,

Run to my closet! haste! where thou wilt find
A golden vial of rich juice, to bring the spirits
Back to their seat: go, pour it in a bowl,
With speed, to save her. [*Exit Ismenes.*]

Hast thou not a word,
A syllable, fair soul?—Speak, speak, Semandra!
I feel a trembling warmth about thy heart:—
It pants——

Sem. As cowards do before a battle.

Oh, the great march is sounded!

Zipb. Stay thee one moment!

ISMENES re-enters, with a bowl.

And I will lead thee on. Away, Ismenes!
Watch thou the King's approach, and bring me
word. [*Exit Ismenes.*]

Here, seest thou this, my love? look up, Se-
mandra!—

Thou dying spark, glimmer a little while!
Behold this cordial, this sure warmth at heart,
This faithful off'ring of eternal love!

Sem. Whither, oh, where? Death's mist comes
fast upon me:—

What is't you drink?

Zipb. A draught which makes me thine,—
The pow'rful cordial which my father gave me,
A noble compound of his fatal skill:

He charg'd me, when I cou'd not live with honour,

To taste it, and be free.

Sem. Methinks your voice is faint
As distant echoes; and I am now far off:—

Alas! I know not where. [Dies.

Zipb. I'll fold thee thus,
And Mithridates shall not part us now;—
Fan thus the dying flame with my last breath.
She's out!—the damp of death has quench'd
her quite!—

These spicy-doors, her lips, are shut, close lock'd,
Which never gale of life shall open more.

I come.—Oh father! Oh thou true physician!
Thou work'st me nobly now; and oh, 'tis welcome!

Thy drugs are quick:—once more, o love, I
come,—

Thou most of life in death!—Ambition! fame!—
'Tis empty all;—and nothing— but a name.

[Dies.

ARCHELAUS, MITHRIDATES *supported, bleeding;*
PHARNACES, PELOPIDAS, ANDRAVAR, *bound.*

Arch. Behold, behold, my Lord, how I'm rewarded

For faithful service, for the numerous scars
Which in your cause have mark'd my aged body!
My daughter's slain. Ha! let me never rise,
If that the brave Ziphares be not kill'd!

Was this the cordial, wicked boy, thou
brought'st him? [To Ismenes.

Mith. Blame not the guiltless: for by me he's
poison'd—

By this inhuman tyrant, monster, parricide;—
By me the drugs were mixt, and doled about
To my unhappy children, lest, surpris'd,
They shou'd be borne to Rome for royal slaves.

Arch. Dead! art thou dead, O lovely, royal
plant?

Blown down by gusty Heav'n, in all thy bloom?
My hour is come; and thus I follow thee.

Mith. Hold him! What means the frantic
general?—

Disarm, and bring him hither! Kneel, O kneel,
Before these bodies.

Arch. What wou'd you, sacred Sir?

Mith. Swear, swear to live!

I have a royal race of little ones:—

Live, I conjure thee, to defend those infants
From Roman rage:—intreat victorious Pompey,
And he'll be gentle to 'em:—swear to live!

Arch. I swear; but after that—

Mith. Rise, and no more!

My blood leaks fast, and the great heavy lading
My soul will quickly sink; therefore, revenge!—
Yes, you pale figures, you most precious forms,
Who, where you walk, for sure you tread the
stars,

Shame brightest Gods, and add new light to
Heav'n!

First, in most dreadful manner, will I give
Those traitors' lives, who drew me to your ruin.
Hence! burn the slaves! the curs'd Pelopidas,
And villain Andravar!—away with 'em!—
For thee (but sure I shall disdain to name thee)
The palace yet is ours.

Arch. But cannot long
Be so: Pompey the Great is entered,
And those who took your part, are all revolted.

Mith. Away, then! bear him to the middle
turret,
Whose brazen-head rises above the rest;
In sight of Pompey, throw him from the top,
And give his most aspiring life an end.

Pbar. I know thou can'st not long out-live
me, tyrant!
Accurs'd be fortune, which too forward bore me
To be thy prey; and rot the hand that seiz'd
me!—

Yet, when my ghost is from this body dash'd,
If such a goblin as a ghost there be,
I'll rise, and wing the mid-way air to wait thee;
Hurl'd shalt thou be, as Saturn was by Jove,
And flag beneath me, while I reign above.

Mith. O General, behold, and wonder with me,
How swiftly Fate can make, or unmake Kings!
How empty is death's pomp, compar'd with life!
Where now are all the busy officers,
The supple courtiers, and big men of war,
That bustled here, and made a little world?

Revolted all. Support me, for I go:—
My soul is on the beach, and straight must launch
Into th' abyss of the black sea of death,
Where furies stand upon the smoaky rocks,
Prepar'd to meet one greater than themselves.
Here, lay me bleeding by these murder'd lovers:
And, oh! when I am dead, let sorrow stalk
In sacred silence to my gaping tomb.
Forget that ever Mithridates was;
No tongue relate the deeds this hand has done;
Let thought be still, or work beneath the ground:
But oh! he's come! cold tyrant, I obey!
And hug thy dart that bears my life away. [*Dies.*

EPILOGUE.

BY MR. DRYDEN.

YOU'VE seen a pair of faithful lovers die ;
And much you care : for, most of you will cry,
'Twas a just judgment on their constancy. }
For, Heav'n be thank'd, we live in such an age
When no man dies for love, but on the stage ;
And ev'n those martyrs are but rare in plays :—
A cursed sign how much true faith decays.
Love is no more a violent desire ;
'Tis a mere metaphor, a painted fire :
In all our sex, the name examin'd well,
Is pride, to gain ; and vanity, to tell :
In woman, 'tis of subtle interest made ;—
Curse on the punk that made it first a trade !
She first did wits prerogative remove,
And made a fool presume to prate of love.
Let honour and preferment go for gold,
But glorious beauty is not to be sold ;
Or, if it be, 'tis at a rate so high,
That nothing but adoring it shou'd buy.
Yet the rich cullies may their boasting spare,—
They purchase but sophisticated ware.
'Tis prodigality that buys deceit,
Where both the giver, and the taker cheat :
Men but refine on the old half-crown way ;
And women fight, like Switzers, for their pay.

THE BOOK

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